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# General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

*Official Records*

**11**th plenary meeting
Thursday, 25 September 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

*President:* The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Address by Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus**

**The President**: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

*Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Papadopoulos**: I would like to extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. We are indeed very happy to see a Minister from a fellow Commonwealth, and also an island State, presiding over the session. I am sure that your diplomatic skills, experience and grasp of the issues will harmoniously steer our work. I would also like to express our thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Jan Kavan, for the excellent record of his presidency.

This year my country is about to fulfil its most ambitious aspiration — joining the European Union. After having signed the accession treaty in April, we expect to become a full member, along with nine other acceding countries, on 1 May 2004. But already we are associated with the work of the Union and participate in all meetings and in the life of the new European family of the 25 members. Hence, Cyprus is represented by the statement of the Italian Presidency of the European Union and fully subscribes to its contents.

Unfortunately, the current session is taking place in a heavy and loaded atmosphere. The deadly attack against the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad last month, as well as the most recent one of two days ago, continue to fill us with bitterness and indignation. We all share the feeling of great injustice and insult to the international community. Once again, I wish to express our deep condolences to the victims' families and our sympathy to those injured. At the same time, we should also convey the message that such actions will not deter us from the pursuit of the high ideals of the United Nations and its engagement in Iraq.

From Baghdad to Jakarta, from Russia to India, and back to the heinous attacks of 11 September two years ago, terrorist acts around the globe serve as a painful reminder that terrorism transcends borders and attacks universal values. Freedom, democracy, human rights and humanity itself have to be defended by the international community with persistence and determination. At the same time, we should be cautious and ensure that our actions are fully in line with the cherished values we want to uphold. As the threat is unfortunately far from over, a genuine global mobilization, under the aegis of the United Nations, is of the essence if this endeavour is to be successful.

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Cyprus is playing its part fully in this concerted effort and is among the countries that have ratified all 12 of the international conventions pertaining to terrorism. Furthermore, it has recently ratified the United Nations Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel of 1994.

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become, and rightly so, a top priority in the world's agenda. The risk of acquisition of such weapons by terrorist groups highlights even more the gravity and the urgency of the issues to be addressed. In that respect, the United Nations has a truly instrumental role to play. The universalization of, and compliance with, multilateral treaties related to disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as verification mechanisms and internationally-coordinated export controls, are essential tools in our efforts. We have repeatedly expressed our genuine commitment to international norms in the field of disarmament. I am happy to report that Cyprus, earlier this year, ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Ottawa Convention.

The Government of Cyprus attaches great importance to the international effort against mine proliferation and the clearing of minefields. For this reason it has taken the initiative to clear all minefields laid in the buffer zone by the Cyprus National Guard immediately after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. In this regard, I would like to announce today my Government's decision and firm commitment: first, to unilaterally start within the next two months, in cooperation with the United Nations and with the financial support of the European Union, mine clearance in the buffer zone and, secondly, to unilaterally proceed with the destruction of an appreciable amount of stockpiled antipersonnel mines this year during the month of November. This is just a first step but, I believe, a major one in the implementation of our obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention).

This year again, the situation in the Middle East remains a source of major concern for the region and beyond. The Quartet's road map, with the overwhelming international support it enjoys, represents an historic opportunity that should not be missed. Unfortunately, in recent days, the international community has held its breath as blind and spiralling violence thwarts the efforts to place and maintain on a solid track this process which would lead to a settlement. The necessary political will should be demonstrated by both sides, at all levels, and be matched with persistent action on the ground, in the right direction.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our longstanding position for a just settlement, in accordance with international law, United Nations resolutions and the agreements reached between the parties, which will put an end to the occupation and realize the aspirations of the Palestinian people for the establishment of an independent state, side by side with Israel, in peace and security. Cyprus, a country of the region with traditionally close relations with both parties, stands ready to assist in every possible way.

The realization of the Charter's vision of a just, peaceful and prosperous world remains inextricably linked with the commitment to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in full conformity with their universal, indivisible and interdependent nature.

The Republic of Cyprus, still witnessing serious violations of human rights within its territory by foreign armed forces, places human rights at the very top of its agenda. While working hard for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all its citizens under the harsh circumstances imposed by the invasion and occupation of a significant part of its territory, Cyprus never loses sight of the universal dimension of human rights and remains active and resolutely watches over the protection of human rights throughout the world. It reaffirms its full support of the Secretary General's efforts to integrate human rights into the whole range of United Nations activities and reiterates its commitment to working closely with United Nations partners towards their universal implementation.

We still strive in Cyprus for establishing the fate of all those Cypriots, both Greek and Turkish, missing since the Turkish invasion of 1974. This is a major issue of a purely humanitarian character and we seek the support of the international community as a whole in order to put an end, at last, to the continuing ordeal of so many families. For this to happen, the cooperation and political will of the Republic of Turkey are absolutely necessary.

Furthermore, the rights of the few remaining enclaved persons in the occupied part of Cyprus

continue to be violated. The rights of the refugees are also still being denied, while our people face new faits accomplis by the occupation army, as in the case of the advance of the Turkish Army in the area of Strovilia. With the assistance of the international community we are, nevertheless, resolved to persevere in the implementation of international conventions and for the restoration of the human rights of all Cypriots.

In view of the new challenges that the United Nations is required to face, Cyprus strongly supports the Secretary General's United Nations objectives, which aim at adapting the internal structures and culture of the Organization to new expectations. It therefore welcomes the work done on strengthening the management and administration — as well as streamlining the budget — of the United Nations.

My country also attaches great importance to the improvement of the intergovernmental structure and processes of the United Nations and the revitalization of the General Assembly as essential elements of the reform process, whose aim is to bring about a stronger United Nations system that will be able to effectively pursue the priorities adopted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

We certainly need effectiveness but we cannot separate it from legitimacy. In Cyprus, we know, from our own experience, both the importance of legitimacy and the need for effectiveness. We have been facing the catastrophic results of aggression and we have been struggling for more than 29 years for the solution of the problem created by the invasion and occupation of the northern part of our country by Turkey.

Despite all efforts, Turkish intransigence has not been curbed and their defiance of numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council continues unabated. Such an attitude constitutes not only unacceptable behaviour in international relations but is also completely anachronistic and incomprehensible to any rational thought. Furthermore it is at variance with the will and the wish of the overwhelming majority of Turkish Cypriots themselves who are persistently asking for a solution and for participation in the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. We continue, as far as we are concerned, to do our best to bring them on board and we have embarked on an ambitious policy in order to enhance their standard of living and allow them to fully enjoy the rights and benefits that they are entitled to as Cypriots.

In Cyprus, we have faced adversity for so many years and we have survived. Hence, we know that we have to persevere. We still believe in the United Nations and we are grateful for its interest and involvement. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts within the framework of his mission of good offices in Cyprus, entrusted to him by the Security Council. I would like also to praise the work of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Mr. Álvaro de Soto, and all members of his team, of his assistant of the United Nations Mission, as well as of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and of the contributing countries. I believe that it is appropriate to mention this here at this stage because, as you all know, the continuing and longstanding Turkish intransigence thwarted a few months ago what was probably the strongest initiative ever of the United Nations for finding a solution in Cyprus.

We understand and share the bitterness and the disappointment of all involved regarding this failure but, as I said before, we should not give up. We have always counted on United Nations support and involvement and we will continue to do so. We are always ready, whenever the Secretary-General invites us, to engage in serious negotiations on the basis of his plan in order to reach a settlement as soon as possible, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions. We hope that it will soon be possible for the other side to realize that they have to return to the negotiating table, to cooperate constructively with the Secretary-General and to demonstrate the necessary political will to yield a settlement.

A solution is urgently needed in Cyprus, a functional and viable solution that will embrace all Cypriots and will allow our country to take its stride and fully assume its place and role within the European family. A united Cyprus in a united Europe will thrive and progress with its partners towards a secure and prosperous future, working hand in hand with all other members of the international community for the promotion of universal values and peace.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by His Excellency Mr. Vladimir V. Putin, President of the Russian Federation**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Russian Federation.

*Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Putin** (*spoke in Russian*): Once again, I am delighted to have this opportunity to address this representative audience. At the outset, however, I should like to wish the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly fruitful work — work to successfully harmonize the actions of peoples and States; work on behalf of peace, security and progress.

Those purposes were set out in the Charter of the United Nations by our predecessors, but, as we can see, they are still relevant. Even now, they provide a solid, long-term foundation for the activities of the United Nations. And, although the structure and the functions of the Organization took shape in an international environment fundamentally different from ours, time has only reaffirmed their universal importance. Today, the instruments of the United Nations are not merely in demand; they are, as life itself has shown, simply irreplaceable in crucial situations.

That has been made abundantly clear by the following important fact: despite sharp differences concerning how to resolve the Iraq crisis, the situation is ultimately returning to the legal sphere of the United Nations. Russia's position in that regard is consistent and clear. Only direct United Nations participation in Iraq's reconstruction will enable Iraq's people to decide their future. And only with active and — I want to stress this — practical United Nations assistance in Iraq's economic and civil transformation will Iraq assume a truly new and worthy place in the world community.

It is clear that, in recent years, the United Nations has increasingly been obliged to carry out fundamentally new tasks and to tackle threats that are different from, but just as serious as, those it faced before. Three years ago, at the 2000 Millennium Summit, I said here that the common enemy of the United Nations was terrorism. Was Russia's voice heeded then? Did everyone understand the seriousness of the threat, and were our joint actions adequate? The events of 11 September proved that, unfortunately, they were not.

To us in Russia, however, the style of the murderers who committed terrorist acts in Moscow, in Chechnya and elsewhere in Russia and in New York, as well as against United Nations staff in Baghdad, has long been painfully familiar. That style is identical everywhere, and the fact that the inciters of terror are easily recognizable — with regard to both the events of August this year and the terrorist attacks of previous years — only attests to the global nature of this threat.

It is true that now we are listening to one another. And we understand that the United Nations must become — and is indeed becoming — the basis for a global anti-terrorist coalition. Here, I wish to take particular note of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee. Terrorism is a challenge to the planet's security and to its economic future. Therefore, the Committee must become a real and practical instrument for effectively fighting the terrorist threat.

I should like to focus in particular on the humanitarian activities of the United Nations. That area consumes the lion's share of the Organization's energy, time and resources, but it does not always appear in the headlines, nor is it always familiar to the citizens of the more prosperous States. But it is precisely that area of United Nations work that is so fundamental and irreplaceable. The United Nations is helping millions of destitute people throughout the world — victims of hunger, of disease and of conflict — to survive and not to lose hope. That work is exceptionally important; it lends indisputable political and moral authority to the entire Organization. And it is here that the interrelationship between the moral and political content of international activities is particularly evident.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all staff members of the United Nations, all non-governmental organizations and, of course, the many volunteers who are participating in this noble work. Because we understand how valuable the Organization's humanitarian mission is, Russia views it as a major political endeavour. We are already contributing to this work, and we are committed to increasing our contribution. Over the past three years, Russia has forgiven a total of $27.2 billion in debt of

developing countries, and we are currently granting significant tariff preferences to such countries.

For the first time in many years, as our country has grown, it has become a donor to the United Nations World Food Programme. The horrors of starvation are well known to us from our own history. As a result of the civil war of the past century and the forced collectivization of the 1920s and 1930s, millions of people died of starvation in the Volga region, in Northern Caucasus and in other parts of our country. Hunger became a national tragedy for the peoples of Ukraine as well. We consider it our moral and ethical duty to expand our participation in food aid programmes.

Russia intends to work actively to resolve acute environmental problems. A milestone will be achieved in that area by the World Conference on Climate Change, scheduled to convene next week in Russia's capital, Moscow. We also believe it is essential that a global system be established to monitor and neutralize dangerous infectious diseases, and we consider the work done by the Global Fund to be a real demonstration of international solidarity in fighting the spread of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Of course, the United Nations, like any system with a complex structure, needs to be improved. But the Organization's past and current problems have never been problems of only the Organization per se; they have always been created by — and they continue to reflect — contradictions in the very system of international relations, particularly the system of international law. After all, politicians, including those represented in the United Nations, including the Security Council, do not always have at their disposal adequate and effectively functioning legal instruments — instruments that would enable them to deal effectively with the international and regional crises that arise. International law must, of course, be fluid and living, reflecting the realities of the contemporary world. I believe that many of the processes that are under way within the United Nations also attest to the constant changes that are taking place in the world. Such changes dictate a logic of evolution in the United Nations.

Members of the Organization know very well that, as a rule, all of the achievements of the United Nations are shared successes, and that our failures are shared miscalculations. Such knowledge, however, brings with it great responsibility. First and foremost, we must be extremely careful about interfering with the fabric — the mechanisms — of the work of the United Nations. Clearly, behind any such decision there should be more than general political rhetoric — mere words about so-called fair policies.

I am convinced that any attempt to modernize United Nations instruments must be preceded by serious analysis and careful calculation. Such an approach should be taken, first and foremost, with regard to the principal international legal instruments. After all, guaranteeing that they remain effective is the only way to avoid a legal vacuum. As long as the norms of international law remain unchanged and operative, we must observe them. We must ensure continuity of security guarantees for States and for the world as a whole.

We must analyse United Nations structures and mechanisms and try to understand which have proved effective and productive, as well as which have done the job they were intended to do and which now remain unused. We should remember that much of the potential of the United Nations has still to be tapped. There are many resources that we are only now learning how to use.

I would like in particular to comment on the need to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council. I am convinced that, given the deep-rooted nature of the current differences of opinion and the importance of ensuring that the Council remain effective, we must work gradually and very cautiously.

We believe that at this stage we should be guided above all by the broadest possible agreement on all aspects of the expansion of the Council, as well as by the need to ensure that it maintains its current high status and the legitimacy born of agreed actions. After all, the Security Council, as the Charter makes clear, acts on behalf of the United Nations. The Security Council is endowed with a specific mechanism for harmonizing political will and for protecting the national interests of a great variety of States, and, through this, the interests of the entire international community.

It is true that we often hear that the developed countries bear special responsibility for the destiny of the world. Such leadership, however, entails major obligations, primarily to ensure that the interests of the international community as a whole are reflected. Being a world Power means working together with the world community. Being a truly strong, influential

State means seeing and helping to resolve the problems of small and economically weak countries.

In that connection, I believe that it would be useful to intensify the work that is being carried out by the United Nations in cooperation with the regional international structures. That will lead directly towards increased economic prosperity in various parts of the world, and thus contribute to the containment of potential threats and the maintenance of a common global strategic balance.

We welcome the emergence of regional centres for coordination and cooperation in a united Europe. We favour the strengthening of integration processes in the Asia-Pacific region. And of course, we support the work of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as that of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose authority and effectiveness are continuing to grow.

Russia is not the only country that is interested in regional integration. Our CIS partners have also demonstrated their practical commitment to that same goal. This was reaffirmed during the recent CIS summit. We consider the development of our interaction with the European Union, which is multifaceted in nature, to be important. Likewise, with regard to security issues, we attach importance to the search new forms of cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

We should counter current threats to civilization only by means of collective responses whose legitimacy is not in doubt. In this respect, we need a systemic vision that combines political with, when necessary, military measures. Such measures should be agreed upon in advance, and be sensible and appropriate.

The need to improve the peacekeeping mechanisms of the United Nations remains on the Organization's agenda. The United Nations must be able to deploy peacekeeping — and, where necessary, peace-enforcement — operations more quickly and efficiently, in strict compliance with the United Nations Charter. I should like to note that Russia, which has always supported the peacekeeping functions of the Organization, is prepared to step up its participation in such operations, both under United Nations auspices and in coalition operations authorized by the Security Council.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems remains a serious challenge to the modern world. The most dangerous challenge is the possibility of their falling into the hands of terrorists. We know what steps must be taken in order to eliminate such threats. These include the further universalization of the existing non-proliferation regimes, the strengthening of international verification instruments and the introduction of safe technologies in nuclear energy production. In general, this requires the renunciation by States of excessive arsenals and military programmes that could undermine the political and military balance and trigger an arms race.

Russia believes that it is extremely important to prevent the militarization of outer space. We believe that a comprehensive agreement should be elaborated on this issue, and invite all countries possessing potential in this area to join our initiative. The Russian initiative to set up, under the auspices of the United Nations, a global system to counter these new threats has already been supported by the General Assembly. We propose the adoption of a new resolution during this session setting out specific further steps in this direction.

In conclusion, I should like to recall that the solid structure of the United Nations has enabled it to withstand all of the many crises of the second half of the twentieth century. It has helped to overcome threats of global confrontation and, most importantly, helped to promote human rights. It has also helped to assert the principles of mutual respect and good-neighbourliness among States. The main thrust of the United Nations approach is that humankind has no alternative but to jointly construct a safer, fairer and more prosperous world. That is our duty to succeeding generations. In that important task we can have no better help than such time-tested instruments as the work of the United Nations, an Organization that, for half a century, took decisions that were crucial for the entire world.

Russia is convinced that the United Nations must maintain its central role in international affairs. This is particularly relevant, and particularly important, for resolving conflict situations. This is our choice and our strategic position of principle.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Russian Federation for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Néstor Carlos Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Argentine Republic.

*Mr. Néstor Carlos Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Néstor Carlos Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Kirchner** (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the Assembly at this session. I would also like to congratulate the outgoing President, Mr. Jan Kavan, for his work at the head of this Assembly at the previous session.

On behalf of my Government, we would also like to reiterate our gratitude for the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to promote peace and multilateralism, and to express our solidarity in wake of the criminal attack that claimed the lives of several staff members of this Organization.

We have come from the world's South to the General Assembly with a firm belief that revitalizing this global representative forum is essential for international law to become once again a rational instrument for resolving conflicts and facing threats. Restoring the major political role that the Assembly played in the early days of the United Nations is key to strengthening security for all citizens of the world.

Indeed, multilateralism is the cornerstone of this Organization. But the cold war and bipolarity that characterized the world after the Yalta Conference until the fall of the Berlin Wall undoubtedly shaped the instruments and legislation that were adopted within that framework.

Any objective look at the international situation that that goes beyond the particular biases of individual Members of the Organization will reveal another hallmark of the world today: the technological, military and economic supremacy of one country over all the rest. We therefore consider it necessary to reaffirm our determined support for the purposes and principles that underpin the United Nations, so that it can actively work to promote peace and the social and economic development of humanity.

But, it bears repeating, we must not limit our commitment to multilateralism to words alone. Promoting multilateralism requires a dual strategy. First, an open mind is needed to objectively grasp the full extent of the new state of affairs. Secondly, we need to reconsider the instruments and rules so to cope with this new reality just as was done during the era of bipolar politics in order to save the world from destruction. Multilateralism and security are inseparable but are not the only factors in this new equation.

The world is changing against the backdrop of a globalization that is creating unprecedented opportunities and risks. The greatest risk is the widening gap between the rich and poor. To divide the world into central and marginal countries is not merely an academic exercise or a matter of ideology. Quite the contrary, such definitions reflect a grim reality of unprecedented poverty and social exclusion. Our priority must be to ensure that globalization works for all, and not just for the few. Promoting the development of the marginalized countries is no longer simply a matter of social conscience on the part of the central countries. It has an impact on their situation and security. Hunger, illiteracy, exclusion and ignorance are some of the basic elements that fuel the spread of international terrorism and cause violent and massive national migration flows, which have cultural, social and economic consequences. They also inevitably threaten the security of the central countries.

Economic integration and political multilateralism hold the key to safer future world. We need to build global institutions and effective partnerships within the framework of fair and open trade and to bolster support for the development of those most in need. If we are to promote collective security intelligently, we must understand that security is not just a military issue; it depends on political, economic, social and cultural factors as well. These are the key challenges on the current international agenda that the main actors must meet.

In this framework, the relations between countries like ours and others in the international

community are affected by a huge and crushing burden of debt owed to multilateral financial institutions and private creditors. We accept our share of responsibility for having adopted policies that caused this indebtedness. But we also call on the international financial institutions — which contributed to, encouraged and promoted the growth of that debt by dictating their terms — to accept their own share of responsibility. It goes without saying that when debt grows to such an extent, not only the debtor but also the creditor bears responsibility. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the tangible, verifiable and rather obvious fact that repaying such a debt entails great hardships.

Without specific international assistance to enable indebted countries to restore economic solvency and thereby their ability to repay debts and without measures to foster their growth and their sustainable development by taking concrete steps to promote their market access and growth of exports, debt repayment remains a pipedream. Promoting exports of finished products based on the natural resources that most indebted countries have can lay the foundations for sustainable development, without which creditors will have to face their losses without any other realistic options.

No one is known to have succeeded in getting their money back from the dead. To reach the objective of making a country viable so it can pay its debts, intensified multilateral negotiations are greatly needed to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers that hinder access of our exports to the markets of the developed countries, which have the largest purchasing capacity. Indeed, there continue to be export and production subsidies in the international trade in food products — Argentina's main export item — as well as tariffs, unjustified sanitary measures and trade restrictions that distort the terms of trade in commodities and seriously hamper market access for finished products.

The failure of the World Trade Organization negotiations in Cancún should serve as a wake-up call to us in this regard and should be remedied by making the greatly sought-after link between business opportunities in international trade and the growth of indebted countries and their debt-repayment capacity. It is paradoxical and even ridiculous that we should be called upon to repay our debt while we are being prevented from trading and selling our products.

On the other hand, although it is true that the objectives of the multilateral institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), include shortening the duration and lessening the imbalance of payments of member countries and instilling confidence by giving them opportunities for readjustment, without taking measures that undermine national or international prosperity, it is also necessary to redesign those multilateral institutions. Redesigning multilateral lending agencies should include changing the models so that the success or failure of economic policies is measured in terms of success or failure in the fight for development, equitable distribution, the fight against poverty and maintaining adequate levels of employment.

This new millennium should banish adjustment models in which the prosperity of some is based on the poverty of others. The dawn of the twenty-first century should mean the end of an age and the beginning of a new collaboration among creditors and debtors.

In a nutshell, it is essential to take note of the close connection that exists between security, multilateralism and economics.

The defence of human rights occupies a central place in the new agenda of the Argentine Republic. We are the children of the mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, and we therefore insist on permanently supporting the strengthening of the system for the protection of human rights and the trial and conviction of those who violate them. All of this is based on the overarching view that respect for persons and their dignity arises out of principles preceding the development of law, whose origins can be traced to the beginnings of human history. Respecting diversity and pluralism and relentlessly fighting impunity have been unwavering principles of our country ever since the tragedy of recent decades.

We strongly advocate a peaceful settlement of international disputes, particularly in a matter as dear to our feelings and interests as our sovereignty dispute with regard to the Malvinas, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

*Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The United Nations has recognized that this is a colonial situation maintained by the United Kingdom and that it must be settled through bilateral negotiations between the Argentine Republic and the

United Kingdom. We value the role of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization and express our fullest willingness to negotiate in order to conclusively settle this longstanding dispute, a steady objective of the Argentina Republic. We urge the United Kingdom to agree to resume bilateral negotiations to resolve this major issue.

Also with reference to the Southern regions, we undertake to protect the interests of the international community in Antarctica, ensuring that the activities carried out there are consistent with the Antarctic Treaty and its 1991 Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection. We shall take steps at the relevant forums for the installation of the authorities and the operation of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat at its designated seat, Buenos Aires.

We express our support and wish for a stable and lasting peace in the Middle East based on the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent and viable State, while at the same time recognizing the right of Israel to live at peace with its neighbours within safe and internationally recognized borders.

We have spoken of progress and collective security as the global challenges of today. We have highlighted the close link that exists between economic problems and security. We firmly condemn all terrorist actions. We know what we are talking about. In 1992 and 1994 we suffered, first hand, our own Twin Towers. The attacks on the Israeli Embassy and the AMIA Jewish Community Center took the lives of over 100 of our compatriots. We can bear witness to the need to fight effectively against the new threats posed by international terrorism.

The vulnerability of all countries in the international community to this scourge can be reduced only through intelligent, concerted and multilateral action sustained over time. The fight against terrorism requires a new rationality. We face an enemy whose logic is to trigger reactions symmetrical to its actions. The worse, the better, is the favoured scenario, and that logic partly accounts for the increasingly spectacular — almost cinematographic — nature of its operations. Legitimate responses and the support of international public opinion are both fundamental to confronting those new forms of violence.

This view places the problem of international terrorism in a dimension that goes beyond a unilateral or military solution. On the contrary, merely responding through the use of force, however impressive such force may be or appear to be, in many cases ends with the perpetrators being presented as victims. This closes in a perfect circle the perverse logic to which we have been referring.

As we see, in view of the complexity of the situation, it is no longer useful to take shelter in old alignments, anachronistic ways of thinking or outdated structures. The new challenges call for different and creative solutions so as not to be left behind by changes in the world in the technological, economic, social and undoubtedly even cultural fields.

Let us rise to the challenge of thinking anew for a new world. To combine different ideas and create practical means to put them into practice in the service of the people we represent is our duty.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Argentine Republic for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Néstor Carlos Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Agenda item 9 (*continued*)**

**General debate**

**Address by Dato' Seri Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia**

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

*Dato' Seri Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Dato' Seri Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Mahathir** (Malaysia): Sir, may I, as Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, offer my sincere congratulations to the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. I am confident that given his wisdom, experience and diplomatic skill, he will be able to steer the proceedings of this session to a successful conclusion. I wish to assure him of the

fullest cooperation of the Malaysian delegation. I strongly believe that the members of the Non-Aligned Movement would similarly render their full support and cooperation to him.

Allow me also to pay tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, for his dedication and the effective manner in which he conducted the work of the fifty-seventh session. I also commend the Secretary-General for his efforts and perseverance, and I salute the men and women who had dedicated and given their lives in the service of the United Nations.

The General Assembly has been conceived as a forum for the nations of the world, big and small, to air their views and grievances freely, as the stakeholders in the governance of the international community. Unfortunately, it is subservient to the Security Council, which in turn is subservient to any single one of the five victors of a war fought more than half a century ago. It is hardly a democratic forum, but it is all that the great civilization of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has — a civilization that is supposed to uphold freedom.

*The President returned to the Chair.*

Still we, the small nations, have much to be grateful for. From being the colonies of the Europeans, we are now independent and we are granted membership of the United Nations with the right to speak, albeit with proper restraint and decorum, in this Assembly. As independent nations, we believe that we have a right to manage our internal affairs ourselves without foreign interference.

We admit that there are abuses in the management of our countries by some of our Governments, but our detractors should remember that they, too, abused their Governments' power when they seized land belonging to indigenous peoples and exterminated them, claiming that it was their "manifest destiny", the "white man's burden", to bring civilization by setting up their own countries in these lands and confining the indigenous peoples to barren reserves, with no role in the Government of the new nations. What they did to the indigenous peoples is not out of character, for in their own countries they carried out pogroms against the Jews, inquisitions and mock trials, torture and killing by burning at the stake.

We all carry the baggage of history, but we would willingly leave it behind were it not for the fact that history has a nasty habit of repeating itself. Today, we are seeing the resurgence of European imperialism. At first, we thought that the colonization would be virtual. Merely by economic strangulation and financial emasculation, the newly independent countries could be brought to their knees, begging to be recolonized in other forms. Today, however, we are actually facing the old physical occupation by foreign forces. Puppet regimes are installed, dancing as puppets do.

This institution, the United Nations, in which we had pinned so much hope, despite the safeguards supposed to be provided by the permanent five, is today collapsing on its clay feet, helpless to protect the weak and the poor. This United Nations can just be ignored, pushed aside, gesticulating feebly as it struggles to be relevant. Its organs have been cut out, dissected and reshaped so that they may perform the way the puppetmasters want. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization have now been turned into instruments of hegemony to impoverish the poor and enrich the rich. It is not surprising that today the disparities between rich and poor are far greater than ever.

With an impotent United Nations and its agencies turned into national organs of the powerful, the small nations are now naked and hapless. Even if we are totally innocent, there is nothing to prevent trumped-up charges being brought against us.

We feel a great need for the integrity and credibility of the United Nations to be restored. Fortunately, the breach of international norms has been by countries which are reputedly tolerant of free speech and the rights of others. When criticisms are forbidden, the abuses will increase until they become intolerable and revolt takes place, with all the destruction that accompanies it. That was what happened with Saddam Hussein on a national scale. That can also happen on an international scale. Free speech provides the safety valve, the absence of which must eventually lead to an explosion.

Since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, Malaysia has not been able to recover fully. This crisis was followed by the collapse of the dot.com companies and the massive cheating by the huge multinational corporations of the rich. Then came the 11 September 2001 attack by terrorists, which precipitated an unprecedented tightening of security worldwide and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The world now lives

in fear — the rich of terror attacks and the others of being made targets of suspicion and pre-emptive aggression.

Then came severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which almost bankrupted many airlines and the tour and travel business. SARS disappeared almost as quickly as it appeared, but there is no guarantee that it or similar new infectious diseases will not come back.

The world has lost its way. The hopes of the post-Second-World-War period and the United Nations were dashed by the cold war. The cold war is over now, but the resultant unipolar world and the ascendancy of capitalism have brought about new threats. No country is safe from marauding currency traders who, in a few short days, can demolish the patiently nurtured economies of the developing world. Far from being curbed, these highway brigands are lauded for their philanthropy. Robin Hood at least stole from the rich to give to the poor. These highwaymen steal from the poor and give a paltry sum to assuage their sense of guilt. They are no philanthropists.

The unipolar world dominated by a democratic nation is leading the world into economic chaos, political anarchy, uncertainty and fear. We are not going to recover or have peace so long as threats are used for political and economic reforms that most of the world is not ready for or willing to accept.

If we want to have democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, the powerful must demonstrate their commitment to all these noble ideas. And they can begin by restructuring the United Nations, in particular by abolishing the undemocratic single-country veto. This should be replaced with a modified veto whereby two veto powers, backed by three other members of the Security Council, would be needed to block any United Nations resolution. Even that, however, should be gradually dismantled in favour of majority decisions in the Security Council.

The other important agencies of the United Nations must be freed from the domination of any single country. Gradually, they should be made more democratic.

The free market must be recognized for what it is — a market in which the bottom line is paramount. It is not a political force for the disciplining of Governments. For the right to exploit world trade, a tax should be levied by the United Nations and used by the United Nations to build needed infrastructure for the poor countries of the world. Exchange rates should be fixed by an international commission based on relevant issues. Apart from a small commission, no profits may be made by speculating or manipulating exchange rates. Subsidies by rich countries for the production of food and other products must be forbidden, although poor countries should be allowed for a stipulated time to protect their industries and food production.

The world has lost its way. The world is moving too fast. We need to pause to take stock of things. There is a Malaysian saying that when one loses his way he should go back to the beginning. We need to go back to the beginning. If we dare to admit it, many of the problems that we face today are due to the arbitrary expropriation of the land of the Palestinians in order to create the State of Israel in order to solve the European Jewish problem.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Dato' Seri Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Patrick Leclercq, Minister of State, Chief of the Government and Director of External Relations of the Principality of Monaco**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Minister of State, Chief of the Government and Director of External Relations of the Principality of Monaco.

*Mr. Patrick Leclercq, Minister of State, Chief of the Government and Director of External Relations of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency the Minister of State, Chief of the Government and Director of External Relations of the Principality of Monaco, Mr. Patrick Leclercq, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Leclercq** (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Your election is welcome testimony of the equal sovereignty of States, a principle to which the delegation of the Principality of Monaco attaches particular importance. I assure you and the members of

the Bureau of our support for your high mission at the service of the international community.

I also wish to congratulate the Secretary-General: all are aware of his tireless efforts to promote with courage and lucidity the ideals our Organization embodies as it faces the challenges of our time. The tragic circumstances surrounding the heinous attack perpetrated in Baghdad last month call for us to pay special tribute to all United Nations personnel and salute with respect and sorrow the memory of those, including Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and his companions, who by sacrificing their lives, have demonstrated the strength and grandeur of commitment to the values that only our Organization can legitimately embody.

When it joined the United Nations ten years ago, the Principality of Monaco pledged to fully abide by the obligations incumbent on all Member States and to participate, according to our means, in the promotion of the values that bring us together. We are all the more attached to that commitment because it is particularly important for small States such as Monaco that all are bound by the same rules in their international conduct and that all enjoy equal dignity and the equal right to respect.

Of course, there is a considerable and at times glaring divergence between the ambitions we collectively espouse and the actual situations we observe around us, which unfortunately afflict so many among us. Assuredly, it would be pointless to ignore the profound differences that may exist between States in terms of both their characteristics and their influence in international affairs. But it is essential that we have a place, a forum in which we are all compelled to judge our actions and conduct by the principles that are supposed to guide our actions and in which we are compelled to examine our conscience — in short, a place where we, as members of the international community, are held accountable to the collective demands of that community.

That is why it is so important that we strive to make the Organization more effective so that respect for our principles and purposes prevails over the seeming ease of self-justification and so that a collective approach based on dialogue prevails over unilateral action. As a question of principle and as a result of reasoning, the Principality of Monaco therefore supports all initiatives aimed at strengthening our collective mechanisms, in particular those undertaken by the Secretary-General pursuant to the Millennium Declaration as presented at the opening of the present session.

Accordingly, the Principality of Monaco attaches particular importance to the effective implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the follow-up to outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. Indeed, what purpose would be served by these enormous gatherings in which all participants vie to demonstrate their magnanimity and generosity if the resulting commitments are not followed up on or lack the means to monitor their implementation? The authority of the United Nations and the confidence placed in it would be diminished, even as the Organization has considerably expanded the range of its activities in order to effectively tackle the problems of our time, acting from the global perspective of its own ongoing responsibility to ensure peace, security and development. Would civil society, which today is present in all the debates that involve it, not feel frustrated and seek to take the lead on its own terms, creating an environment of confrontation?

While participating in the many activities pursued within the Organization, a small country such as the Principality of Monaco must reasonably assess the size of the contribution it is able to make to the action of the international community. Thus, we have focused our efforts in the areas of sustainable development and humanitarian action because we feel that our acquired experience enables us, despite our human and material limitations, to make a useful contribution since we can count on very dynamic Monegasque non-governmental organizations, which benefit from particularly generous local support. I am happy to convey our appreciation to those organizations.

Monaco's priority areas are education, health, the protection of children, development assistance and environmental protection. Its activities have resulted in numerous achievements in the field, particularly in Africa, where our aid has doubled following the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Monaco has also achieved much in the Mediterranean region. All Monaco's initiatives are complemented by our active participation in the forums where those various situations are addressed.

The Principality of Monaco focuses on concrete projects such as schools, occupational training centres,

healthcare centres, investments in local communities to promote economic activity in village communities through micro-credit programmes. All those projects are aimed at directly improving the living conditions of their beneficiaries.

In the area of the environment, in which the Principality has long distinguished itself, especially in the protection of the marine environment since one of Monaco's sovereigns, Prince Albert I, helped found the study of oceanography in the late nineteenth century. Our experience has led to us being chosen to participate in the next Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme. The Principality of Monaco has also been the source of many initiatives related both to protecting its immediate environment, the Mediterranean Sea, and to monitoring pollution and preserving biodiversity elsewhere, with a long-term perspective of support for sustainable development.

Resolutely committed to participating in the efforts of the international community to rise to the most recent challenges with which it has been confronted, Monaco has ratified the twelve main international instruments relating to terrorism, putting into place appropriate administrative structures. Furthermore, it is the first State to ratify the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which will enter into force in the next few days, on 29 September. It is also preparing to host, next month, the Fifth International Summit on Transnational Crime, organized by the United Nations and the Council of Europe, which will bring together representatives of Governments and the private sector. In the same spirit, the Principality works with all the relevant institutions to fight drugs and human trafficking and the illegal financial flows they engender or sustain.

Need I also reaffirm the obvious commitment to peace and security of a country as sensitive to its environment as Monaco, even if, having no armed forces, it is unable to participate in collective actions under the flag of the United Nations? It is in the humanitarian field that Monaco consistently makes its contribution by assisting civilian populations, victims of combat and the upheavals and atrocities that too often today characterize armed conflicts, as can be seen particularly in Africa. In a symbolic solidarity, the Principality celebrates the International Day of Peace on 21 September and associates itself with the Olympic Truce, given Monaco's involvement in the Olympic movement as symbolized in the long-standing participation of Crown Prince Albert in the International Olympic Committee. We thus welcome the inclusion of a new item on the agenda of this session, entitled "International Year of Sport and Physical Education", whose goal is to highlight what has always been our motivation, the outstanding role of sport in developing relations between peoples by promoting mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue, factors that contribute to both peace and development.

As I conclude this statement, I hope I have succeeded in communicating the profound attachment of the Principality of Monaco to the world Organization that it joined 10 years ago at His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III's initiative. He was convinced that his country would thereby gain a most effective international profile, protection in an uncertain world and an opportunity to usefully demonstrate its solidarity. Since Monaco is naturally open to the outside world, it has easily found its place among you.

Our Principality is grateful for what the United Nations has given it and is striving in return and to the extent of its capacity to help the Organization achieve its objectives with the conviction that what the international community needs are reliable Member States. And reliability is not a question of size but of will. It is this will that inspires and guides us.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Minister of State, Chief of the Government and Director of External Relations of the Principality of Monaco for the statement he just made.

*Mr. Patrick Leclercq, Minister of State, Chief of the Government and Director of External Relations of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted from the rostrum.*

### Address by Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

**The President**: The Assembly will hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

*Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and in inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Vajpayee** (India) (*spoke in Hindi; English text provided by the delegation*): Mr. President, we congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We wish you every success in our shared endeavours. You will have our fullest cooperation in your efforts.

As we gather here, in the wake of the many momentous events over the past year, it is inevitable that we should ponder some fundamental questions about the role and relevance of the United Nations.

The United Nations was charged by its Charter "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." The Charter also speaks of our collective determination "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security." There was an implicit conviction that the United Nations would be stronger than the sum of its constituent Member States. Its unique legitimacy flows from a universal perception that it pursues a larger purpose than the interests of one country or a small group of countries.

This vision of an enlightened multilateralism has not materialized. There have been difficulties and deficiencies in ensuring a world free from strife, a world without war. The United Nations has not always been successful in preventing conflicts or in resolving them.

During the past year, the United Nations encountered new challenges. We saw the extraordinary inability of the five permanent members of the Security Council to agree on action in respect of Iraq, in spite of complete agreement on basic objectives. Most recently, the brutal terrorist attack on the United Nations Office in Baghdad struck a body blow at the United Nations' humanitarian efforts there.

Looking back at events over recent years, we can analyse the successes and failures of the United Nations in this or that crisis. But it would be more purposeful to reflect on our own commitment to multilateralism, the extent of its applicability in the real world of today, and the manner in which it can be exercised through the United Nations. The reality is that an international institution like the United Nations can only be as effective as its Members allow it to be.

Our reflections on the United Nations should focus on three key aspects:

First, we need to introspect on some of the assumptions that have been made over the years concerning the will and reach of the United Nations. In the euphoria after the Cold War, there was a misplaced notion that the United Nations could solve every problem anywhere. Its enthusiasm and proactive stance on many issues reflected laudable intentions. But we soon realized that the United Nations does not possess magical powers to solve every crisis in all parts of the globe or to change overnight the motivation of leaders and communities around the world. //We need to clearly recognize, with a sense of realism, the limits to what the United Nations can achieve, and the changes of form and function required for it to play an optimal role in today's world. We need to clearly recognize, with a sense of realism, the limits to what the United Nations can achieve, and the changes that it needs to make to its form and function to play an optimal role in today's world.

Secondly, the Iraq issue has inevitably generated a debate on the functioning and the efficacy of the Security Council and of the United Nations itself. Over the decades, the United Nations membership has grown enormously. The scope of its activities has expanded greatly, with new specialized agencies and new programmes. But in the political and security dimensions of its activities, the United Nations has not kept pace with the changes in the world. For the Security Council to represent genuine multilateralism in its decisions and actions, its membership must reflect current world realities. Most United Nations Members today recognize the need for an enlarged and restructured Security Council, with more developing countries as permanent and non-permanent members. The permanent members guard their exclusivity. Some States with weak claims want to ensure that others do not enter the Council as permanent members. This combination of complacency and negativism has to be countered with a strong political will. The recent crises should serve as a warning to us that until the Security Council is reformed and restructured, its decisions cannot truly reflect the collective will of the community of nations.

Thirdly, even after such reform, the Security Council would have to develop suitable decision-making mechanisms that ensure better representation of the collective will of the international community. How can multilateralism be genuinely implemented? A single veto is an anachronism in today's world. On the other hand, the requirement of unanimity can sabotage imperative actions. A simple-majority vote may not be

sufficiently representative for major and serious issues. Should we aim for the highest common factor, or should we settle for the lowest common denominator? Democratic countries could use their national experience to provide feasible models for mechanisms and determine the extent of support required based on the impact of action to be taken.

The Secretary-General has rightly emphasized the urgent need for reform of the institutions and processes of the United Nations. We encourage his efforts in this direction. We should seek to implement these reforms within a specified time frame.

The Iraq issue continues to present a major challenge to the United Nations. At this point in time, it is not very productive to linger on the past. Our thoughts and concerns should be about the suffering of the people of Iraq. It is imperative that the people of Iraq should be empowered to determine their own future and to rebuild their nation.

The immediate priorities are ensuring security and stability, restoration of basic facilities and infrastructure and a road map of political processes for a representative Iraqi Government. It is clear that the United Nations has a crucial role to play in the process of political and economic reconstruction of that country. This has been acknowledged both by those who had opposed military action and by those who did not seek specific United Nations endorsement for it.

One issue on which the United Nations showed remarkable unanimity after 11 September was global terrorism. Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1456 (2003) were unequivocal in condemning all forms of terrorism and in calling for united action against support, shelter, sponsorship, arming, training and financing of terrorism or terrorists.

Unfortunately, the solidarity that was voiced has not translated into coherent and effective action. Terrorist acts continue to shatter our peace, from Mombasa to Moscow and from Baghdad to Bali. India has had more than its share of terrorism in various parts of the country. The global coalition against terrorism has registered successes in Afghanistan, but has not been able to extend this elsewhere. Some of its members are themselves part of the problem. We are sometimes led to enter into semantic arguments over the definition of terrorism. The search for root causes or imaginary freedom struggles provides alibis for killing innocent men, women and children.

There is much that the United Nations can do to carry forward the war against international terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Committee should develop measures to ensure compliance by Member States of their obligations under Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1456 (2003). We should have credible multilateral instruments to identify States that contravene these resolutions. Multilateral mechanisms must be created to detect and choke off international financial flows to terrorists and terrorist organizations.

A much better international system of information exchange and intelligence sharing needs to be devised to prevent terrorists from evading capture simply by crossing national borders. No State should be allowed to profess partnership with the global coalition against terror, while continuing to aid, abet and sponsor terrorism. To condone such double standards is to contribute to multiplying terrorism.

Yesterday, the President of Pakistan chose this august Assembly to make a public admission for the first time that Pakistan is sponsoring terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. After claiming that there is an indigenous struggle in Kashmir, he has offered to encourage a general cessation of violence within Kashmir, in return for reciprocal obligations and restraints.

We totally refuse to let terrorism become a tool of blackmail. Just as the world did not negotiate with al Qaeda or the Taliban, we shall not negotiate with terrorism. Were we to do so, we would be betraying the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who defied a most ferocious campaign of violence and intimidation sponsored from across our borders and participated in an election, which has been universally hailed as free and fair. This was an unequivocal expression of both determination and self-determination.

When the cross-border terrorism stops, or when we eradicate it, we can have a dialogue with Pakistan on the other issues between us.

While on this subject, I would also like to point out to the President of Pakistan that he should not confuse the legitimate aspiration for equality of nations with outmoded concepts of military parity.

We should be particularly concerned at the various recent revelations about clandestine transfers of weapons of mass destruction and their technologies. We face the frightening prospect of these weapons and technologies falling into the hands of terrorists. Surely

something needs to be done about the helplessness of international regimes in preventing such transactions, which clearly threaten international security. The same regimes expend considerable energy in imposing a variety of discriminatory technology-denial restrictions on responsible States.

Our preoccupation with terrorism should not dilute our commitment to tackle the non-military threats to human and international security. We have to sustain the fight against trafficking in narcotic drugs, human beings and small arms, the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, diseases like malaria and tuberculosis that beset developing countries and the degradation of our common environment. Food security, energy security and health security are important goals.

The countries of the North and of the South — the developed, developing and transition economies — must resume their dialogue to build a better world for the present and future generations. For the agenda of globalization, Cancún was a disappointment. Significant progress was made at Johannesburg towards the realization of sustainable development, but the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change remains stalled and the Convention on Biological Diversity has not yielded any tangible benefits to the world's poor.

International economic relations continue to be characterized by inequities and inequalities. Globalization has helped sections of the international economy, including some developing countries; however, large communities have been left outside its pale. It has engendered economic crises and instability in several developing countries and sharply increased poverty.

Poverty is multidimensional. It extends beyond money and income to education, health care, skills enhancement, political participation at all levels from the local to the global, access to natural resources, clean water and air, and advancement of one's own culture and social organization.

Poverty alleviation requires resources on a far greater scale than now available. Globalization itself places constraints on Governments of developing countries in raising public resources for poverty alleviation. The promise of the climate change and biodiversity treaties to raise significant resources for investment and technology transfer is as yet unrealized. The resources of multilateral and bilateral development agencies are limited by the failure of industrialized countries to enhance development budgets.

Therefore, if the current regimes of globalization and sustainable development are to be expanded — or even to survive — they must be directly harnessed to provide the necessary resources for poverty alleviation. In fact, all international agreements and initiatives affecting developing countries have to be evaluated by their impact on poverty.

Developing countries need to coordinate their positions in international negotiations to promote the adoption of regimes which would help alleviate poverty. The India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum, which was established earlier this year, is an effort in this direction.

We in the developing countries do not have the luxury of time. Political compulsions force us to meet the aspirations of our people quickly, even as we subject ourselves to newer and more rigid international standards and norms. We owe it to our future generations to make strong efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals. There is a mutuality of interest in this between the developed and the developing countries. Global interdependence today means that economic disasters in developing countries could create a backlash in developed countries. We hope the world will act in this spirit of enlightened self-interest.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted from the rostrum.*

### Address by His Excellency Mr. Marc Forné Molné, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra.

*Mr. Marc Forné Molné, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency, Mr. Marc Forné Molné, the Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Forné Molné** (Andorra) (*spoke in Catalan; English text provided by the delegation*): During the past two years, the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as in Africa, have brought turmoil to the world.

The United Nations has never been more necessary, yet perhaps never has its efficacy been so questioned nor, until the bombings last month in Baghdad, have its people been the object of such massive direct attack.

In the Principality of Andorra, encircled by the high mountains of the Pyrenees, we have lived peacefully and democratically between our neighbours for over 700 years. Since 1419, our Parliament has met to debate the problems of our people. It was not only our small size and isolation that kept us apart from the wars that ravaged Europe; rather, our desire for independence, the unity of our people, and also our ability to get along with our powerful neighbours made Andorra one of the oldest democratic States in the world.

In the past half-century, since the founding of the United Nations, the world has changed, and Andorra with it. Less than a century ago it was only possible to reach Andorra by horse. Now roads bring us 12 million tourists each year. Telephones, computers, satellites and airplanes bring the world to Andorra and we in turn have reached out to the world. In the time of my grandparents, Andorrans never travelled far from their mountains. Now we are world travellers.

One of the proud moments in the long history of our country was the day in 1993 — ten years ago — when we became a Member State of the United Nations. We joined with great hopes and all these years we have believed in its crucial role, despite the crises that may have cooled that belief.

The terrorist attack on the United States of America marked the beginning of a very complex stage in relations among nations and of a difficult equilibrium among different areas of our planet. The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were both set in motion by this attack; one had the support of the United Nations while the other did not. While there is no point in returning to that debate, two questions must be addressed.

First, can the United Nations effectively respond to threats to world stability? Secondly, to what degree will its Member States be willing to work within the framework of the United Nations? Perhaps a cooling of passions will enable us to address these difficult issues clearly.

We are all too aware of the difficulties and dangers that beset both the citizens of these countries and the troops of Member States who are working to bring stability to these places. We hope for a rapid solution to the myriad difficulties involved in ending the series of sad and painful events that have taken place within these countries over the past few years.

The United Nations has a critical responsibility in fostering a constructive outcome for the Afghan and Iraqi people and also in resolving tension throughout the Middle East. In this regard I wish to express our confidence in the United Nations to bring an end to this complex and cruel conflict, a crucial step for the stability of the region and an important matter for the future of mankind. The United Nations will know how to find new ways and adequate solutions and will play a leading role in the establishment of new paths.

As politicians, we pride ourselves on our knowledge of the needs of our citizens. We are students at the university of the national will. The most successful among us have cultivated a keen sense of the everyday desires, frustrations, and goals that are important to our citizens. If we live in a democratic State, and ignore those needs, the voters will quickly look for others who do not.

The United Nations is a different kind of university. Here the lessons of national self-interest must give way to an international understanding. In this university of the world, our previous studies, by which I mean our own political careers, can only help us in the short term. But what we study together here are long-term lessons that can ensure the long-term survival of the world we share.

Although Andorra is small in scale, like many partners in the United Nations, what we smaller nations have to contribute is larger than our proportionate geographic scale or the relative size of our population. Indeed, our small size has made us by necessity careful observers of the needs of others and our centuries of independence have taught us responsibility to our citizens and our neighbours. We have never forgotten the bonds that link us to the world. Our history has taught us this.

Legend has it that Andorra was founded by Charlemagne, who, let us recall, was one of the key

historical players in the battles between Islam and Christianity. In the thirteenth century, however, it was the religious tension between the Count of Foix, who was a Cathar sympathizer, and the Catholic bishop of Urgell that led to a balanced agreement resulting in the independence of Andorra. Andorra came into existence partly as a buffer State between two powerful lords and between two approaches to Christianity: the orthodox and the Cathar.

The Cathars are only a distant memory now, but I raise this issue here because it points to the battleground of belief. Whereas the Church once summoned councils to struggle over the problems of heresy, we now gather at the United Nations not to insist on one form of belief, but to recognize and sustain the common ethical base that unites all beliefs, all ideologies, under the unshakeable canopy of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

*Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

We are now in the twenty-first century and not in the Middle Ages, but those who then were fundamentalist Christians and who resolved everything with anathemas, crusades and exiles have given place to those who practice other forms of religious intolerance of different persuasions. It is shameful to see that, even today, people are being killed or kill in the name of their God.

The work that the United Nations accomplishes, therefore, does not simply pay lip service to diversity. We need to advance, in all moral seriousness, an ethic of diversity that goes beyond recognizing the value of tolerance and multiculturalism and strives to implement shared ethical values in the service of world understanding.

In 1278, the strategic importance of Andorra lay in its proximity to the border between Catholic Europe and al-Andalus, Islamic Spain. The road that led to the great city of Cordoba — where the philosophy of Aristotle was retranslated from Greek and Arabic into Latin and re-entered the thought of the Christian West in the renaissance of the twelfth century — passed close by our country.

In the centre of that city, the Muslim rulers built an astonishing mosque with a forest of columns, made all the more beautiful by the presence within it of a synagogue. Such was its beauty that it was not destroyed when the Christians captured the city, but converted into a Cathedral, just as the great basilicas of Constantinople became the great mosques of Istanbul when that city fell to the Ottoman empire a century later.

What if we could learn from the events that have marked history, making use of the lessons of peaceful coexistence, avoiding past mistakes and appreciating the moments of openness between cultures in previous centuries?

We live in a world of vast contrasts where technological progress, used dangerously or simply without precaution, has made life more perilous on a global scale. Where once the great plague took years to make its way across Europe, modern plagues — be they biological viruses or computer viruses — travel across the globe in a matter of hours.

Pollution and global warming concern us all. The strange climactic shifts of recent years, the pollution of our great oceans and lakes, threaten our environment. Perhaps most dangerously, nuclear weapons threaten the life of everyone on the planet. All of these calamities, present or looming, demand international cooperation if we are to survive.

It is most sad that some of those who could do most to prevent the degradation of life on Earth continue to look in another direction — at the balance sheets of the big companies that contaminate the Earth most egregiously — and continue to apply an energy policy based on the uncontrolled exploitation and low cost of limited resources.

We have become a little world. We have become like a small country, rather like Andorra, where everybody knows everybody else's business. As we become smaller, the need to combat poverty and suffering has become all the more important. We cannot forget that images from more fortunate countries are beamed into the lives of people existing in difficult or even life-threatening circumstances across the world. No matter that these images may be propaganda and distortions of the truth — our modern technology, the source of so many comforts and advantages, is also demonstrating the full scale of our differences.

We must learn to treat all members of the world as we would like to see our own citizens treated. We need to insist on a decent life for everyone, for all mankind.

Andorra is committed to aiding development around the world. Since 1995, we have regularly increased our budgetary contributions and hope to devote 0.7 per cent of our budget to third-world aid within two years. Our philosophy of development supports the institutions of the United Nations, looking to small-scale solutions that foster self-reliance and local initiative. We are particularly enthusiastic about projects aimed at children, education and those who help women to establish their own businesses. We are also committed to encouraging sustainable farming because we recognize that proper farming practices provide the best defence against catastrophic crop failures. To that end, Andorra also proposes within the next year to become a member of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The insignificant part of the Andorran budget devoted to the purchase of weapons resulted in the composer and singer Pete Seeger dedicating a song to us in the 1960s. His verses still echo today, just as they did when he made a whole generation sing "We shall overcome. We shall live in peace". Many things have happened since those days and Andorra no longer allocates so much as $4.50 towards its defence budget. We do not spend a penny.

In this diverse and contradictory world, with all that is squandered on new weapons and old, the whole of mankind could live decently. We could eliminate all diseases. Education and culture would be made available to all. Thus, we could end fanaticism and all those who abuse the ignorance of the people would end up without victims or lackeys.

Let us try and make some use of these long debates and speeches which we applaud with diplomatic courtesy, often without even hearing them. Too much is at stake for all of us.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Marc Forné Molné, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.*

## Address by Mr. Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Ireland.

*Mr. Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Ireland, His Excellency Mr. Bertie Ahern. I invite him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Ahern** (Ireland): For the United Nations and the system of collective security that it represents, the past year has been a traumatic one.

Our Organization could ill afford the loss of the dedicated and experienced members of staff who were killed by an act of terrorism in Baghdad on the 19 August. I do not diminish the contribution of each and every one of those who lost their lives in the cause of humanity if I give individual mention to Sergio Vieira de Mello. I would like to pay particular tribute to his work in bringing to birth the new State of Timor Leste, which has become the latest Member of the United Nations.

We are living in a period of great insecurity. We are stalked by fear — fear of war, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, famine, disease, ethnic and religious hatred, and organized crime. Governments are acting, individually and in groups, to shield their people from these threats. However, the nature of the challenge requires coordinated global action.

Fortunately, we have the United Nations Organization, which brings together the nations of the world in the service of international peace and security. If we did not already have such an organization, we would surely have to invent it. The tragedy for mankind is that we do not make the most effective use of it. We are frequently told by commentators that the United Nations has failed. All too often, it is difficult to disagree.

So, who is to blame? To answer that question we have to ask: what is the United Nations? The answer is to be found in the Charter. This Organization was established in the name of the peoples of the United Nations. When the United Nations fails, it is because we, the Governments that represent the peoples of the United Nations, have failed, individually or collectively, to meet our obligations.

Our most common failing, I would submit, is that we frequently overlook the fact that this Organization was created to serve not just our own nation, but all mankind. Too often, Members seek to use this

Organization to pursue their national interests by seeking to have it adopt resolutions that are partial or biased; by ignoring its resolutions when these do not suit them; and by encouraging action on certain issues and conflicts while blocking action on or even consideration of, others. All too many of us have been guilty of such an approach.

We simply cannot afford to continue with this attitude. The world is fast changing. Every day brings a new awareness of just how interdependent we all are. The option of shutting ourselves safely away behind protective walls no longer exists. We have to learn to live together, to share the resources of this planet and to look after each other. We can retain our national, cultural and religious identities, but we need to recognize that we are, first and foremost, all members of the human race, and we must act accordingly.

We need a viable system of global governance that can ensure international peace and security. To be viable, such a system must possess two essential qualities: effectiveness and legitimacy. To be effective, it requires the unambiguous support of the entire community of nation States. Its decisions must be respected and, where necessary, we must be ready and able to act to secure such respect. To retain legitimacy, the system must be seen to work in the interests of the entire international community.

I appeal, therefore, to the Governments represented at this session of the General Assembly for a change in our attitude to the United Nations. Let us cease treating it as a tool useful only to the extent that it can deliver on our national agenda. Instead, let us use the United Nations to harness our collective resources in the interests of each and every member of mankind. To adapt the words of President John F. Kennedy, let us ask not what the United Nations can do for us, but what we can do for the United Nations.

The United Nations needs reform. We all accept that. Our institutions are not sufficiently effective and, in some instances, are not adequately representative of today's membership. We have discussed these issues at great length, but we have balked at taking the hard decisions. The time has come to put the interests of the wider international community before narrow national concerns.

We are fortunate, at this moment, to have as Secretary-General a man of the stature of Kofi Annan; a man who is held in universal regard and who is seen to stand for the interests of the entire international community. He has not shrunk from grasping the nettle of reform, and in his address to this Assembly he called on the Members of this Organization to grasp it with him. We must find the courage and generosity to take up this challenge.

The past two years have been a particularly sober period in the history of mankind. There has been so much death and destruction across the globe. How much of this might have been avoided if the United Nations had been better able to fulfil the noble purposes set out in the Charter?

I do not claim that it is possible to eradicate man's capacity for evil or to totally eliminate the tendency to seek to resolve disputes through violence. But I do submit that a stronger, more resolute, more respected and more active United Nations might have prevented some of the suffering of the past two years.

The world today is very different from that which existed when the Charter was drawn up. It is smaller, more crowded, more combustible. Isolated pockets of human habitation have been brought together by a population explosion, migration, faster and cheaper air travel, television, the Internet, the growth of free trade and the development of weapons of mass destruction. What happens in one part of the world can increasingly have an instant and dramatic effect in another part.

This evolution has raised questions concerning the interpretation of two important provisions of the Charter. The first is paragraph 7 of Article 2, which in effect excludes the United Nations from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State. Yet the problem arises increasingly in our global society as to whether and when a matter can be considered as falling entirely within the domestic jurisdiction of a State. Some situations are clearer than others.

In my view, when events within a country threaten international peace and security, they become the legitimate interest of the international community. Similarly, I cannot accept that the international community should stand by and accept the large-scale, flagrant and persistent violation of human rights. We have received sharp lessons in the past. The trigger for intervening to prevent an attempted genocide should not be the moment that refugees begin to flood across the border.

At the same time, international intervention raises serious questions. It can also pose serious risks to the international regime. Clearly, intervention is objectively called for in some extreme cases. But there is a need to work carefully through this concept with a view to forging an international consensus around it.

Another issue that has recently come to the fore and was highlighted by the Secretary-General is that of Article 51 of the Charter and the conditions under which Member States have the right to act in self-defence. The development of weapons of mass destruction in the period since the signing of the Charter, and the appearance of non-State actors with the capacity for mass destruction, raise serious questions as to the point at which a State might consider it necessary to act in self-defence. This is also an issue that requires serious reflection.

My Government would be deeply concerned at the widespread acceptance of a doctrine of pre-emptive strike. Given the ever more lethal nature of modern weapons, the risk of large-scale death, destruction and escalation are enormous.

More effective than striking pre-emptively, of course, is to pre-empt the risk of conflict through a wide range of steps in the diplomatic, economic, humanitarian and other areas.

We should devote more attention to dealing with the root causes of conflict. We must seek to identify potential conflicts as early as possible and deal with them before they get out of hand. Where conflict nevertheless becomes a possibility, we should act more assertively to head it off. We simply cannot afford to accept the existence of so-called forgotten or ignored conflicts. Any conflict that threatens international peace and security is the United Nations legitimate business and should be on the agenda of the Security Council.

I would now like to touch briefly on a number of specific issues that are of concern to my Government.

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people continues to pose a serious threat to world peace. My own country's difficult national experience shows that there is no such thing as a straight line to peace. Our experience in Ireland clearly demonstrates that farsighted leaders cannot allow their efforts to be held hostage by terrorists and extremists. They must have the wisdom to look beyond the politics of the last atrocity.

What is more, leaders must be prepared to deal with each other. As the Nobel Laureate John Hume once said, "you make peace with your enemies, not your friends". President Arafat has a responsibility to lead his people away from violence and back to the negotiating table. It is a responsibility that he must assume. Threats to expel or assassinate him are deeply misguided and dangerous and can only further delay efforts to achieve a settlement.

Lasting peace can only be achieved through negotiation. Palestinians must realize that violence has failed. Terrorism is wrong and has brought nothing but misery to both Israel and Palestine. It has made compromise more difficult than ever.

Israel must see that repression and attempts at physical separation will not deliver long-term security. The most effective means for Israel to secure a peaceful future would be to accept the Palestinian people's right to a viable State of their own on the basis of the 1967 borders. Israel should immediately reverse its policy of building settlements, settler-only roads and a security wall on Palestinian territory.

It is imperative that the parties re-engage in the task of implementing the road map, leading to a two-State solution based on the vision enshrined in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). They need the support of the Quartet. But such mediation will not succeed if it is, or is perceived to be, one-sided. We must be careful to ensure that our demands are balanced and that we hold both sides equally to account.

The people of Iraq are suffering from events that in most cases are not of their making. We want to see this suffering brought to an end as soon as possible. The Iraqi people can only play a part in that by rejecting those who engage in violence and industrial sabotage. The occupying Powers must be scrupulous in meeting their obligations under international law.

The Iraqi people need and deserve the support of a united international community in the political and economic reconstruction of their country. The United Nations, with its unique experience and legitimacy, is essential to efforts to help the Iraqi people recover their sovereignty as soon as possible and to forge a new Iraq, at peace with itself and with its neighbours. We look to the members of the Security Council at this crucial moment to assume their responsibilities and to reach an agreement on a new resolution that reflects the interests

of the people of Iraq and that can enjoy the necessary support of the region and of the broad international community.

The proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons poses a serious threat to international peace and security. We must recommit ourselves to controlling the spread of such weapons, and working towards their complete elimination. This can only be achieved through a comprehensive and rigorous system of international treaties and obligations that are verifiable and universal.

Ireland, with its partners in the New Agenda Coalition, will continue its efforts in respect of nuclear disarmament during this year's General Assembly. Ireland calls on all States who are concerned about the issue of weapons of mass destruction to become constructively engaged in the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process. There can be no room for double standards.

We must also remain resolute in our determination to counter the threat of terrorism. We owe it to the victims of 11 September, and to the victims of terrorist atrocities before and since then. The measures put in place by the Security Council have made it more difficult for international terrorist networks to organize and to finance their activities. These organizations, however, do not stand still. We must remain vigilant and redouble our efforts to make it impossible for the agents of international terror to operate.

In doing so, however, we must be clear that the need to act against terrorism offers no license for action contrary to the United Nations Charter, or against the body of international human rights and humanitarian law that we have so painstakingly constructed.

We must also seek to deal with the causes of terrorism. Terrorism is not some kind of original sin. No child is born a terrorist. At some point in their lives, some people become terrorists. We have to identify how and why.

And if we find that young people are being indoctrinated into terrorism, we have to deal with those who seek to incite hatred and terror. If we find that they act, however wrongly, in reaction to real or perceived injustice, we have to confront that fact and, as far as it is possible, seek to eliminate the reality or perception of that injustice. To seek to understand the causes of terrorism should not be misunderstood as being soft on terrorism. On the contrary, it is an essential step in its elimination. I can speak from experience of developments in my own country for many decades.

The Government and people of Afghanistan face important challenges in the coming year, in particular the adoption of a constitution and the holding of national elections. Severe difficulties stand in the way, especially the precarious security situation. The sustained and wholehearted support of the international community is required if Afghanistan is to recover from its long ordeal. For Ireland's part, it has delivered on its pledges to the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

In Africa, encouraging progress has been made in the past year towards the resolution of some long-standing and intractable conflicts. We urge the parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement the commitments that they have entered into. Neighbouring States must abide by their commitments and their obligation not to interfere in the area.

Sierra Leone remains on track, with the help of the United Nations, towards a future and peaceful development. And progress has been achieved in Liberia. I want to pay tribute to the efforts of those Member States that have contributed to this positive development. Their continued engagement, along with the United Nations, will be indispensable in helping the people of Liberia to consolidate what has been achieved and to build peace in their country. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that my Government in the next few days will recommend to our Parliament that Ireland's Defence Forces participate with a sizeable contingent in the forthcoming United peacekeeping operation in Liberia.

Respect for human rights is an essential foundation for peace and security. Lack of respect for human rights is at the root of many conflicts, internal and international. The promotion of human rights is rightly the concern of the international community as a whole. It must remain a central task of the United Nations and must be integrated into all United Nations activities.

There is no room for complacency. We must all recognize that no country, including our own, is perfect. We can all do better.

I pay tribute to the many brave individuals around the world — defenders of human rights — who risk

discrimination, imprisonment or worse to ensure that Governments live up to their human rights obligations.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court was a clear signal of the determination of the international community to bring to justice those who are involved in genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Ireland, together with its partners in the European Union, will continue to offer firm support to the International Criminal Court, as its work gets under way. I urge those who have not signed or ratified the Rome Statute to do so, and I urge all States to adhere firmly to the principles on which it is based.

The peace process in Northern Ireland remains a major priority for the Irish Government. Regrettably, due to diminishing trust between the political parties, the devolved political institutions in Northern Ireland were suspended nearly one year ago. Since then, we have been working to re-establish the trust and confidence necessary to restore and sustain these institutions.

This involves both ensuring that all vestiges of paramilitary activity are consigned to the past and that all parties commit themselves to the full and stable operation of the democratic institutions of the Good Friday Agreement. Following intensive negotiations, we came tantalizingly close in April to making the required breakthrough but unfortunately did not get matters fully resolved at that time.

After one of the most peaceful summers on the streets of Northern Ireland, the process is now entering another decisive phase of challenge and opportunity. Developments over the next few weeks will have a crucial bearing on whether elections — which I believe should take place before the end of the year — will be held in an atmosphere that is conducive to forming a working administration on the other side of the polling day.

For this to happen, all of the pro-Agreement parties must show leadership and courage, face up to their responsibilities and take the decisions they know are right, and encourage their constituencies to reach out to others. As partners in this process, Prime Minister Blair and I — and our two Governments — are working closely together to support and encourage all those political and community leaders who are taking risks for peace.

From other areas around the world struggling to escape from a legacy of violence, we in Ireland know all too well that a process of conflict resolution cannot rest still. Either it continues to move forward or it loses momentum and direction and falters. To complacently assume that current opportunities for progress can be deferred until a more politically convenient moment is both wrong and dangerous. In the case of Northern Ireland, the moment of opportunity is now and it is my hope that in the weeks and months ahead all of the parties who subscribed to the Good Friday Agreement will collectively rise to that challenge.

Poverty and insecurity go hand in hand. The efforts of the United Nations to promote international peace and security must be closely aligned with its work in tackling the root causes of poverty.

When I launched the United Nations Human Development Report in Dublin last July, I noted how powerful a reminder it was that the world is becoming a more unequal place. According to the report, 54 countries — the great majority of them in Africa — are poorer now than they were in 1990. A world where more than 1.2 billion people continue to live on less than a dollar a day, where 14 million children are orphaned because of HIV/AIDS and where women in the poorest countries are 175 times more likely to die in childbirth than women in rich countries is inherently unjust and hence insecure.

*The President returned to the Chair.*

At the United Nations special session on HIV/AIDS in 2001, I said Ireland would increase its contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS by an additional $30 million per year. Last year, our spending on HIV/AIDS programmes exceeded $40 million — a ten-fold increase over the past three years.

The Millennium Declaration called for a global partnership for development, and as in any partnership, there are responsibilities on all sides. Undertakings on official development assistance, debt relief, and governance must be achieved. We must be rigorous in assessing our progress in 2005, as we committed ourselves to doing.

At the Millennium Summit, I committed Ireland to reaching the United Nations target for official development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by 2007. Since then, Ireland has increased its official development assistance to 0.41 per cent and remains committed to reaching the target by 2007.

Fair and open international trade is essential for global peace and prosperity. It is an integral part of the multilateral system that we are pledged to protect. I regret that it did not prove possible to reach agreement at the recent World Trade Organization talks in Cancun. I understand the frustration of those who consider themselves unfairly treated in global markets. But if we turn our back on the multilateral trading system and allow trade and investment to be diverted and distorted by bilateral and regional arrangements, we will damage — perhaps irreparably — the best tool available to us to make serious inroads into poverty and to raise standards of living on a global basis. Let us redouble our efforts to achieve an agreement that offers fair market access and at the same time allows all of us to preserve the essence of our unique cultures and environments.

The past year might have been a difficult one for the United Nations, but events have demonstrated that for the people of the world it is the indispensable Organization at the centre of our system of collective security. We have invested it with unique legitimacy and authority. People around the world look to it in hope and expectation. Let us work together to make sure that the United Nations is an organization worthy of the ideals enshrined in its Charter, worthy of the trust of those who rely on it for help and protection, worthy of the idealism and dedication of those who work for it and worthy of the sacrifice of those who have given their lives in its service.

As the Secretary-General made clear when he addressed this session of General Assembly: we are at a fork in the road. Let us be sure to take the right road.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Ireland for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.*

### Address by The Honourable Mr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta.

*Mr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, The Honourable Mr. Edward Fenech Adami, and in inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Adami** (Malta): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. You have an important and challenging task ahead. In executing your duties, you can be assured of my full support and that of the Maltese delegation.

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the outgoing President of the fifty-seventh session, Mr. Jan Kavan, for the dedication and initiative with which he accomplished his task. I would also like to express our support for the Secretary-General. The past 12 months have been a particularly difficult time for him and for the Organization he serves so well. We respect and admire the patience, tact, wisdom and determination that he has once again demonstrated in these trying times.

The attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August has added an unwelcome dimension of tragedy and urgency to this year's session of the General Assembly. Our thoughts are with the relatives and friends of the victims, to whom we again express our deepest condolences. Not for the first time in its history the United Nations is mourning the violent death of its talented servants in the course of their duty.

Besides being a human tragedy, it was indeed — for the first time — also a direct and deliberate attack on the United Nations itself. In this sense, an analysis of the implications of the attack in Baghdad needs to form an integral part of the broader considerations relating to the structures and objectives of the international system.

The reality is that in the United Nations the international community has a system that is both vital and indispensable. However, it is also a fact that the international community has taken this system for granted for too long. Events over the last few weeks and months constitute a renewed reminder that urgent reform is necessary. We need to heed the Secretary-General's advice that this action has to be radical.

One important element in the process of building international cooperation and solidarity lies in the regional dimension. That dimension was given its importance in the original architecture of the United

Nations Charter. Over the last 12 months Malta, together with nine other countries, successfully concluded negotiations to join one of the most creative and impressive manifestations of regional cooperation: the European Union. The results of those negotiations were confirmed by the people of Malta, first in a referendum and subsequently in the general elections held earlier this year. Our desire to join the European Union stems primarily from our appreciation of both the history and the present reality of the European-Mediterranean region, and of Malta's place and role in that region.

At the same time, for Malta, the objective of membership in the European Union has also been a further means of deepening and reinforcing its longstanding commitment towards international cooperation and solidarity.

We are gratified to see how the European Union is fast becoming one of the main partners of the United Nations in the collective endeavour towards global cooperation and solidarity. We are encouraged to discover how much that partnership enhances the opportunities for even the smaller members to play a positive and constructive role in many issues of global concern.

Among such issues, the question of security in all of its complex dimensions has assumed formidable proportions this year. One of the more disturbing aspects in that regard is the way in which the different dimensions of terrorism and arms control have become intertwined. That link has become a factor in the sometimes differing perceptions of the sources of the security risks faced by States. In turn, that has led to differences of emphasis in action priorities, even among States with otherwise very convergent policies and approaches. When such differences are reflected within the Security Council itself, there is a risk of erosion to the still fragile structure of international legitimacy.

On the question of Iraq in particular, it is critically important for the Security Council to reach early agreement on the role the United Nations must play in the re-establishment of order and legitimacy in that country. We strongly urge all members of the Council, in particular the permanent members, to spare no effort to achieve that objective.

The question of armaments today confronts us in its bewildering complexity. At one extreme is the outrageous reality of child soldiers brandishing lethal conventional weapons. At the other extreme is the increasingly credible prospect that terrorist groups will procure and use weapons of mass destruction to bring major tragedy and destruction to the hearts of States. These extremes have intruded into the more traditional disarmament process that has itself been moving forward hesitantly and intermittently over the years.

Yet however hesitant and intermittent it may be, the disarmament process has produced some results upon which we can build further. A range of agreements and instruments are already available concerning both weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. The more immediate challenges in this regard lie in the areas of compliance and verification.

Over recent months, the European Union has been working on a comprehensive security strategy on the issues of non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction. One of the key principles underpinning this strategy is the need to uphold and implement the multilateral treaties and agreements that exist in this area. Equally important is the need to support the multilateral institutions charged with verifying and ensuring compliance with these agreements. Primary among these institutions is the United Nations.

Terrorism in our day is a phenomenon that is unprecedented in terms of motivation, tenacity and methods. Over the past 12 months terrorist acts have indiscriminately struck peoples, both in areas of active conflict and elsewhere. The counter-terrorism measures put in place following the attack here in New York on 11 September 2001 provide us with tools which can have an effect if applied forcefully, universally and consistently. Our response must remain adamant and clear. At the same time, as the Secretary-General reminds us, while there is an unquestionable need to confront terrorist groups with determination, this should never be at the expense of the commitment to human rights.

The objective of increased security at the global level demands efforts across a range of widely different fronts, ranging from issues relating to peacemaking and peacekeeping, to issues relating to economic and social development.

The United Nations has a steady record of positive involvement in peacekeeping. The recent experiences in Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Kosovo provide encouraging instances of this. The Secretary-General reminds us that peacekeeping efforts, and especially what he terms "robust" peacekeeping, must

be provided with both the necessary capabilities and an adequate mandate. He also correctly points out that peacekeeping must be preceded by effective action towards conflict resolution.

The question of Palestine is one issue with regard to which sustained efforts at conflict resolution have not yet prevailed. Over the past few weeks we have been witnessing the gradual disintegration of yet another major and sustained effort at peacemaking in that region.

The immediate obstacles to peace in Palestine arise from two contrasting directions. On the one hand is the reality of an illegal occupation of territory originally achieved, and continuously maintained, by armed force. On the other is the reality of a resistance to this occupation that uses unacceptable means of civilian terror and destruction to pursue its ends.

These two realities feed upon each other in a vicious cycle of ever-escalating hatred and violence. Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the situation in Palestine is the fact that each successive failure of effort towards peacemaking ratchets up the level of hatred and violence. The international community needs to find a way of breaking the conditionality which makes the two extremes feed upon each other.

Israel needs to clearly recognize the illegality of its presence in the occupied territories. This implies the reversal of the measures that are accompanying this occupation — in particular the building and maintenance of settlements and the construction of the partition wall on Palestinian territory.

Furthermore, the support of the chosen leadership of the Palestinian people is necessary if progress towards peace and stability is to be achieved. In this spirit, we call upon Israel to desist from any act of deportation and cease any threat to the safety of the elected President of the Palestinian Authority.

For their part, the Palestinians must recognize that all violent acts against civilians are unacceptable and must stop unconditionally. The Palestinian Authority needs to assert its control and prevent any further acts of terrorism.

In spite of the latest setbacks, the approach by the Quartet still needs to be supported and encouraged. By virtue of its composition, the Quartet offers the best prospects for finding ways of breaking the conditionality that feeds the extremes on both sides. The hope remains that, at the core of both the Israeli and the Palestinian populations, the desire for peace and reconciliation is stronger than the delirium of fear and hatred.

Malta always views the problem of Palestine from the perspective of its effect on issues of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. Our membership of the European Union will provide us with enhanced opportunities to intensify our traditional role in this regard.

Progress in the process of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation has been slow but steady since the European Union launched its Euro-Mediterranean initiative in 1995. The process has itself been affected by the vicissitudes of the situation in Palestine over these years. Yet the general trend has remained positive, even in the most difficult of times.

The recent resolution of the Lockerbie issue further helps in creating the right atmosphere for enhanced regional cooperation.

It is now our hope that the work of the Secretary-General, accompanied by the efforts of persuasion of the European Union, will succeed in resolving one of the still outstanding problems in our region — the problem of Cyprus. Malta would welcome in May next year the integration of a reunited Cyprus into the folds of the European Union.

One of the major strengths of the Euro-Mediterranean process lies in the linkage that it maintains between security issues and wider issues of cooperation in the economic and humanitarian fields. In his report this year, the Secretary-General underlines the fact that issues related to development form an important part of the commitments undertaken under the Millennium Declaration. The Secretary-General notes that a stronger consensus has been forged on this issue. But he also cautions that grave doubts remain as to whether Member States are sufficiently determined to act on this consensus.

The failure of the World Trade Organization meeting in Cancún last week highlights the difficulties inherent in translating broad consensus into concrete action. In the area of trade, as in other areas of development, it is indeed the case that globalization has exposed a major disequilibrium and great inequalities in the international arena. In some respects it has also exacerbated the injustices arising from those

inequalities. There is an even greater need, therefore, for the international community to persevere in its efforts towards more concrete and effective measures of consensus-building. The high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS that recently concluded highlights the way in which problems that have a global dimension need to be tackled.

The problem of AIDS also underlines the importance of continuing efforts towards norm-setting in the various dimensions of international life.

The practice of holding annual treaty events, instituted following the Millennium Summit, has proved its value in this regard. This year's event is focusing on Treaties against transnational organized crime and terrorism. On that occasion, Malta will be depositing its ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two of its protocols. We will have thus already ratified or acceded to 11 of the 15 Treaties on which the Secretary-General has focused for this year's event.

One area where norm setting is in its early stages concerns the issue of cloning. Malta approaches this issue from a moral and ethical standpoint based on the deepest respect for human life. We believe that while scientific considerations are sometimes relevant in matters of this nature, final decisions must primarily be based on fundamental human, ethical and moral considerations. In this spirit, the draft resolution proposing a convention that bans all forms of human cloning fully reflects our views. For this reason we will support this draft resolution. At the same time, we also believe that on issues of such deep ethical and moral sensitivity, real progress can only be achieved through consensus.

The issues before the General Assembly are many and wide-ranging. Such a dense and varied agenda confirms the relevance and vitality of our Organization. At the same time, it also points to the problems regarding the effectiveness and functionality about which so many of us are concerned.

I trust that under your guidance, Mr. President, the Assembly will find the wisdom and energy to clearly define its priorities and take the necessary action. I wish you every success in your endeavours.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta for the statement he has just made.

*The Honourable Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, His Excellency Mr. Silvan Shalom.

**Mr. Shalom** (Israel): I would like to congratulate His Excellency, the Foreign Minister of Saint Lucia, upon his assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly, and wish him much success.

Until just one month ago, every person in this hall and every Member of this Organization joined us in the hope that the Middle East peace process might finally be back on track, and that a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might be on the horizon. The establishment of a new Palestinian Government promised an end to terror and a new beginning.

This glimmer of hope was darkened on 19 August by the extremists who blew up a bus full of Jewish families on their way home from prayers at the Western Wall, the holiest site in the Jewish religion. Twenty-three people, young and old, mothers and babies in their cradles, were slaughtered in that attack. That attack was carried out by Hamas, a terrorist organization, which, under the road map, should have been dismantled by the Palestinian Authority. Failure to dismantle Hamas and other extremist organizations has brought our diplomatic efforts to a standstill. Rather than acting to fulfil its obligation, the Palestinian Authority has chosen the route of inaction, and complicity in terror.

We cannot allow this to continue. We must restore hope that we can build a better future for our children. The infrastructure of terror must be dismantled so that we can put our peace efforts back on track. There is no time other than now. There is no other way.

For many years it was thought that terrorism in the Middle East was Israel's problem, not the world's. Today, the world knows otherwise. Today, it is not only Israel that mourns the loss of its loved ones, including women and children and babies, at the hands of the terrorists. Sadly, we have been joined by peoples from across the globe — from Mombassa to Casablanca and from Moscow to Bali. Even the United Nations, which for so many has been a symbol of peace and goodwill, is not immune.

Gathered here today in New York, just two short years after 11 September, the community of nations knows that those who seek to advance their political agendas through killing innocents are ready to strike at anyone or anything that represents the values of freedom and human life.

Terrorism has declared war on us all. Israel has often stood alone in this battle. A country that has suffered more than any other from terrorism, we have always understood the danger it poses to democracy and freedom everywhere, even when others refused to see this, and condemned us for our actions. We have always understood that terrorism, no matter what cause it claims to serve, seeks only to destroy, rather than to build.

There can be no neutrality in the war against terrorism and there can be no immunity for those who engage in it. Abstaining is not an option. This is not a war of choice. Terrorism will not be eliminated until the world unites against it. Our only choice is to win. Every member of the international community must take concrete and proactive measures to cut off all channels of financial, moral and political support to this common enemy.

States Members of this institution that sponsor terrorists and give them shelter are accomplices in the acts of terror themselves. They must be held accountable for their crimes. It is no coincidence that States that sponsor terrorism, like Iran and Syria, are also striving to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Their hostility to freedom and the rule of law puts the very future of humanity in jeopardy.

I know that many in this place see Yasser Arafat as the symbol of the Palestinian struggle. Tragically, for his people and for ours, he is one of the world's icons of terror. In the 10 years since Arafat made a commitment to Israel and the world that he would no longer use terror, 1,126 Israelis have been killed and thousands wounded in 19,000 separate Palestinian terrorist attacks. In relative numbers, this would be the same as 11,000 French or 56,000 Americans dying from terrorism in the same period of time.

This carnage must stop. Its impact on both societies is devastating. Yasser Arafat bears direct responsibility for this terrible suffering. He has led his people along the path of terror — from hijackings to suicide bombings — for more than 30 years, always preferring Israeli pain over Palestinian gain. He has been — and he remains — the greatest obstacle to peace between our peoples. For as long as he controls the levers of power, no moderate leadership can emerge. To vote for Arafat, like we saw in this Assembly just last week, is to vote against the Palestinian people. When Arafat wins, terrorism wins, and we all lose. Instead of rallying around Arafat, the international community must rally around the genuine interests of the Palestinian people. They must do so now, before he leads them even further down the path of terror and destruction.

When a responsible and empowered Palestinian leadership finally emerges — a leadership ready to join the war on terror — it will find us a willing partner for peace. Israel is committed to the vision for Middle East peace laid out by United States President George Bush on 24 June 2002. Israel will not compromise on the safety of its citizens, but we will go the extra mile, as we have proven before, to bring peace and security to both our peoples.

We are ready to work with the Palestinians and with the international community to make this vision a reality. For this to happen, the Palestinian leadership must take the moral and strategic decision to abandon terrorism once and for all, and make peacemaking possible. They must guide their people to build their own society, rather than seek to destroy ours. They, too, must understand that it is not poverty that breeds terror but terror that breeds poverty.

We cannot stop only at dismantling the infrastructure of terror. We must also build an infrastructure of peace. It is up to political and moral leaders everywhere to foster an environment which rejects extremism and empowers the peacemakers. This is particularly so in the Arab and Muslim world, where incitement against Israel closes hearts and minds to the possibility of peace.

Leaders must guide their people away from the culture of hate, and replace it with a culture of tolerance. Concrete expressions of cooperation and exchange must be built in media and government, education, science and business, to reinforce the message of tolerance and acceptance.

For the sake of our collective future, voices of moderation must be heard. For the sake of our collective future, Israel and the Arab nations must learn to live together side by side, to overcome our conflicts just as the nations of Europe have learned to overcome theirs. Israel is living among its Arab neighbours. We

believe in a common future of peace and prosperity with them. My many meetings with Arab leaders over the last few days have encouraged me to believe that together we can make our region a better place.

This culture of peace must permeate not only the borders of the Middle East, it must permeate the walls of the United Nations as well. In the past, the United Nations has shown us that it can play a positive role. This Assembly was key to the founding of the State of Israel, 55 years ago. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) are our guideposts to negotiations and peace.

To play such a constructive role in the future, the United Nations must reform. It must move away from the partisan hostility that has taken over its Middle East agenda. For more than three decades, this Assembly has passed every year a litany of resolutions designed to discredit Israel, challenge its interests, and promote the will of its greatest enemies.

In my hand I am holding a collection of the decisions of the fifty-seventh General Assembly on the Middle East — 175 pages filled not with hope, but with the negative agendas of the past. No other country has suffered such unjustified attack and consistent discrimination within the United Nations system. The time has come to end this campaign of diplomatic incitement. For the sake of Israelis and Palestinians — for the sake of the United Nations and peace itself — I call on this body to rise above the tired politics of yesterday, and adopt a new, courageous agenda for tomorrow.

I call on the General Assembly to abandon the automatic adoption of anti-Israel resolutions and to find ways of making itself relevant once again to the interests of the people it claims to serve. I call on this Assembly to fulfil its historic mission and help promote what unites us, not what divides us.

On the morning of 1 February of this year, Israel lost its first astronaut in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster — a skilled and courageous pilot whom I knew personally, a child of Holocaust survivors, a national hero. Colonel Ilan Ramon embodied the spirit of our nation. He was a man of courage and action, dedicated to the well-being of his people. Just as he sought to contribute to the advancement of his fellow man, he met his death, together with colleagues from the United States and India, on a scientific mission in the name of humanity as a whole.

Israel's place in such endeavours of international cooperation and accomplishment is no coincidence. In the 55 years since the State of Israel was established, recognized and welcomed into the family of nations, our achievements in the fields of science and technology, the arts and literature and agriculture and medicine have come to rank with the best in the world. Our international cooperation programme is celebrated in over a hundred countries around the globe, sharing skills, experience and knowledge for the benefit of millions of people. We extend this hand of friendship to all the nations of the world. We welcome our improving relations with Europe, just as we remain committed to promoting closer ties with the nations of Africa, Asia and the Americas.

The Zionist vision of Israel's founders was to bring into the world a State in our ancient homeland to serve as a haven from persecution for our people, a place where the Jewish people could fulfil its right to self-determination in the modern era and a bastion of democracy and opportunity for all its citizens. Our founders also made a promise not just to the people of Israel, but also to the people of the Middle East as a whole — to pursue peace and to work for the common advancement of our region.

I know personally the profound meaning of this historic undertaking. I came to Israel as a young refugee from Tunisia. I serve as one of hundreds of thousands of immigrants to whom Israel has granted promise and protection, freedom and opportunity, through the values and institutions of democracy.

I stand here today to reaffirm, before the nations of the world, the commitment of my country to peace. Peace for the people of Israel is both a moral and historic imperative. "Shalom" — the word for peace in Hebrew — is central to our language and our heritage. It is how we say "hello" and it is how we say "goodbye". It is a name we give to our children. It is my own family name.

It was our prophet Isaiah, who brought this message of peace to the world centuries ago, when he said: "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against Nation, neither shall they learn war any more".

Israel's historic record is clear. Whenever a true partner for peace has emerged, he has been met with Israel's extended hand. This was true when President

Anwar Sadat of Egypt came to Jerusalem in 1977 and it was true when King Hussein of Jordan signed the Peace Treaty with us in 1994. The same is true today. Israel stands ready to complete the circle of peace with all its neighbours — real peace, not just peace for the headlines, but peace which brings an end to violence and hostility and positive change for the citizens of our region.

From this great rostrum — a rostrum shared by all humanity — I call on the leaders of Syria and Lebanon, of Iran and of the Palestinian people to abandon once and for all their hostility towards us and to join us in building a better future for our children.

This evening, I shall return to Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people, to join with them in celebrating Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. According to our tradition, this is a time when God determines the fate of each and every individual for the coming year. These are days of reflection and prayer. May all our prayers for peace and for life be answered, and may the actions and deeds of all the States and peoples represented here in this Hall bring to mankind peace and all the blessings that life can offer.

**The President**: I now call on His Excellency the Right Honourable Mr. Jack Straw, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Straw** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I begin by paying a tribute to Dr. Akila Al-Hashimi, a senior member of the Iraqi Governing Council, who died earlier today.

I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Al-Hashimi earlier this year in London and later in Baghdad, and I was struck by her courage and her dedication to the Iraqi people. Dr. Al-Hashimi was murdered by those who would deny the Iraqi people the democratic, prosperous future they so richly deserve. The best service that we can render her memory is to defeat the terrorists and to ensure that her vision of a peaceful, free Iraq prevails.

Of course, we owe this service to all those who have fallen in the cause of peace in Iraq. Sergio Vieira de Mello and the United Nations personnel who were killed or injured in the blast in Baghdad on 19 August were committed to bringing the ideals of the United Nations to the people of Iraq. They paid the ultimate sacrifice for their dedication. We mourn their loss, but we will not weaken in our resolve to help the Iraqi people rebuild their country on the principles of justice and security.

What, I think, makes Iraq so important was the way in which it tested the role and purpose of this institution over more than a dozen years. Throughout that period, the international community remained in agreement that the regime of Saddam Hussein posed a Chapter VII threat to international peace and security by its proliferation of weapons of mass destruction programmes and its unparalleled defiance of the will of the United Nations. Yet, earlier this year, sadly, we divided on when and what action was necessary to deal with the Iraqi threat.

Of course, I acknowledge the controversy over the military action which the United Kingdom, the United States and others took and the heavy responsibilities we now bear, but I firmly believe that the decisions we took were the right ones. The authority of the United Nations was at stake. Having given Saddam Hussein's regime a final opportunity to comply with the United Nations, what would have happened if we had simply turned away? Would the world be a safer place today? Would Iraq be a better place today? Would the United Nations be a stronger institution today? The answer to each of those questions is no. Saddam Hussein would have been emboldened by our failure to act; every dictator would have been encouraged to follow his example; and the authority of this United Nations would have been gravely weakened.

Yet, whatever the arguments of the spring, we have now to come together again for a common purpose. As the Security Council has recognized in its three resolutions 1472 (2003), 1483 (2003) and 1500 (2003), we have a shared interest in helping Iraqi citizens to embrace the rights and freedoms which they have been denied so long and for which this institution was founded. Yes, the security situation does present formidable challenges. Terrorists who despise freedom are seeking to plunge Iraq into chaos. They have inflicted terrible blows on the Iraqi people, coalition soldiers and international aid workers, but ultimately they will fail.

And let us also not lose sight of what has been achieved and what is taking shape. Saddam Hussein's reign of terror is over. The apparatus of torture and oppression which claimed hundreds of thousands of

lives is at an end. Instead, we have the beginnings of a representative Government run by Iraqis for Iraqis; new ministries providing daily services to the people; a free press; the freedom for members of all religious communities to worship as they wish; hospitals and schools in operation; bustling traffic on the streets and highways; and a start to real economic regeneration.

We shall stay in Iraq as long, but only as long, as it is necessary to meet our clear responsibilities and to restore sovereignty to the Iraqi people as quickly as we can in an orderly manner. I hope very much that we can agree a new Security Council resolution to strengthen the United Nations role in Iraq. In managing this transition, we should be guided by three central principles: first, the transfer of powers must reflect realities on the ground in Iraq, particularly the need to ensure security; secondly, the Iraqi institutions must be sufficiently robust to take on increasing responsibilities; and thirdly, the exercise of executive powers and responsibilities must be based on good governance, involving representative Iraqi authorities and coherent constitutional arrangements. In other words, the timetable should be driven by the needs of the Iraqi people and their capacity progressively to assume democratic control, rather than by fixing arbitrary deadlines.

Iraq is, sadly, not the only territory in the Middle East where the international community faces great challenges. Three months ago, we all had high hopes about the work of the Quartet of the United Nations, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States in Israel and the occupied territories. It is tragic that these hopes were blown apart on 19 August by the terrorist atrocity in Jerusalem, which came only a few hours after the terrorist atrocity against the United Nations in Baghdad, but the international community has to stay united on both the means and the ends in the Middle East. There are no alternatives to the road map and there can be no alternatives to the outcome the entire world wishes to see — two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. This can be the only fitting memorial to the thousands who have died on both sides since the beginning of this appalling conflict.

The breadth of the issues being tackled by the United Nations and its agencies demonstrates the continued relevance of this institution. The Counter-Terrorism Committee has given the United Nations a focus for its work following 11 September two years ago, but we must now build upon that work, giving the Committee the expertise and the remit to reinforce the capacity of Member States to tackle and to overcome terrorism.

We also know that proliferation is one of the greatest threats we face alongside terrorism. Much good work on proliferation is being done by United Nations agencies, particularly the International Atomic Energy Agency, but it is extraordinary that the Security Council itself has not addressed the issue of proliferation for over 10 years. In our judgement, it is time that it did.

Problems of internal conflict, on the other hand, are regularly on the Security Council's agenda. The United Nations has unrivalled expertise and experience in this area and has achieved great things in countries as far apart as East Timor and Sierra Leone, but nation-building is a collaborative effort, requiring the resources and commitment of Member States if the United Nations peace-building is to be effective. We therefore need new mechanisms to help prevent conflicts and then to help States before they collapse.

We must also make a real success of the Millennium Declaration. We have to overcome the setback of Cancún and secure a positive outcome to the Doha Round.

These and other shared problems require collective responses, as our Secretary-General so eloquently said here in his speech on Tuesday. A key to this is to ensure that the United Nations itself remains an effective global forum capable of delivering results. The Secretary-General posed some difficult questions two days ago. I welcome his initiative to seek the advice of a distinguished group to make proposals on reform. I welcome, too, his parallel commitment to modernizing the United Nations and its agencies.

For our part, the United Kingdom is committed to making the Security Council more representative. The issue is not whether but how to do this. A bigger and more representative Council, however, will not of itself make it easier to make the tough choices which it has to face so often. The most important ingredient is the political will and determination of the members of the Council to take effective action.

The most important part of the Secretary-General's speech on Tuesday was about the choices now confronting the United Nations. He was right about those. We have indeed come to a fork in the road.

Down one route lies a world in which the United Nations strengthens its role as the collective instrument for protecting our peace and security; down the other route lies a world in which collective action becomes a synonym for "inaction". We must not take this second route. The Secretary-General's speech was a challenge to all of us. We all share a world in which international terrorists strike down the innocent, regardless of faith or nationality, and we are all less secure when weapons of mass destruction are in reckless hands. We do not have the luxury simply of rejecting unilateralism, while proposing no multilateral means of confronting and dealing with these threats.

The British Government is profoundly committed, as it always has been, to the ideals of the United Nations. To us, the importance of this Organization has always been its ability to put those high ideals into effect. We will work wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General and the international community to ensure that the United Nations retains and strengthens both its idealism and its effectiveness.

**The President**: I now call His Excellency Mr. Jan Karlsson, Minister for Development Cooperation, Migration and Asylum Policy and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

**Mr. Karlsson** (Sweden): In the early morning of 11 September 2003, our Foreign Minister Anna Lindh died, murdered in a senseless crime. One of Sweden's most prominent and respected leaders is gone. We have lost a part of our future. She spoke for the oppressed, for the victims of human rights violations. She worked for international peace and justice and for multilateral cooperation. The voice of Anna Lindh has been silenced, but her burning conviction echoes with us.

We meet at a time when the United Nations is facing difficulties and doubts. The capability of the United Nations has often been in question. Despite crises and shortcomings, the United Nations has always withstood these tests. The United Nations was indispensable in 1945 and it still is.

Global security cannot be achieved by unilateral action. Locking ourselves in will not bring peace, development, democracy or respect for human rights. We must work together to define and address emerging challenges for multilateral solutions.

The Secretary-General recently said:

> "We can no longer take it for granted that our multilateral institutions are strong enough to cope with all the challenges facing them". (*A/58/323, para. 4*)

I welcome Kofi Annan's challenge to us. The Nordic countries stand behind him. The United Nations and we, the Member States, must adapt. Reform is necessary to stay modern, responsive and efficient and to retain the trust of global civil society. International solidarity must be in focus when redefining our common agenda. Attaining the goals of the Millennium Declaration is a shared responsibility.

The legitimacy and authority of the Security Council must be regained. Its composition must better reflect the world of today. I believe that an agreement on enlargement with a number of non-permanent members could be reached fairly quickly, without excluding the possibility of additional permanent members at a later stage.

We welcome the Secretary-General's intention of establishing a high-level panel to consider threats to our security and the institutional reforms required for the United Nations to respond.

North Korea has withdrawn from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and remains unclear about its intentions. The nuclear programme in Iran, the possession of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan, and Israel's refusal to sign the NPT continue to cause concern. In several countries, nuclear weapons are accorded a growing importance in military doctrines. Discussions in the United States about the creation of a new generation of smaller nuclear arms are worrying to us. Such weapons would not contribute to a safer world, but risk lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons.

The threats from weapons of mass destruction can only be met by multilateral efforts. The negative arms spiral must be reversed. The non-proliferation Treaty must be universally complied with. Sweden continues to work for this goal, together with its partners in the New Agenda Coalition.

We need new ideas on disarmament and non-proliferation and on how to strengthen existing regimes. To this aim, Sweden has initiated an independent, international commission chaired by Mr. Hans Blix. Last June, the General Assembly adopted a forward-looking resolution on the prevention of armed

conflict. Sweden will continue to work for a strengthening of the capacity of the United Nations practical preventive work.

Our focus must be the security of the individual. Violations of human rights can never be accepted. State sovereignty also implies responsibility. If Governments fail to protect their people, the international community must be prepared to act. In its report *The Responsibility to Protect*, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty points out important issues for the international community to take on. How can we make sure that sovereignty and independence never become a license to abuse people? How should the international community live up to its responsibility when States fail to protect their people?

We must make full use of instruments available to avoid war. The Security Council must be ready to act on early warning signals on threats of mass violations of human rights. Mechanisms to prevent such situations may be intrusive in character and need to be strengthened based on accountability and international law. As the Secretary-General said in his speech on Tuesday, the Security Council needs seriously to discuss the best way to respond to threats of genocide or other comparable massive violations of human rights. Prevention of genocide will be the topic for the Stockholm International Forum to be held in my country in January.

There must be an end to impunity. The International Criminal Court is now operational. The Court will act as a deterrent to perpetrators and a universal and equal tool for justice.

Two years ago, Foreign Minister Anna Lindh was accompanied to the General Assembly by her then 11-year-old son David. When he entered the Hall, he asked: "Mom, where are all the women?" He saw what many of us seem blind to. There are too few women here, as in very many decision-making bodies around the world. Gender equality is about making use of all human resources.

Women are strong, but they are made vulnerable through legal, economic and social discrimination. Women are made victims of violence in war, of abuse at home, of trafficking, of sexual exploitation. For these women, gender equality is a question of life and death. Women's equal rights to education, to a professional career and to participate in politics are not a threat to us men. The absence of these rights is a threat to the progress of mankind.

Peace operations require joint efforts to be successful. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the recent experience in the Democratic Republic of Congo — President Kabila's discussion of which the other day we listened to very carefully — the European Union-led police mission in the Western Balkans and the military operation in Macedonia, are all examples of this. We will continue developing the cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union and welcome the political declaration on crisis management.

Many painful lessons can be drawn from the violent conflicts in West Africa. Sweden welcomes the large and broadly based United Nations peacekeeping Mission in Liberia. The international community must support the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States in finding sustainable solutions for the entire region. The European Union is trying to strengthen such a partnership through the work of Hans Dahlgren, its Special Representative to the Mano River Union countries.

Women are crucial to peace and reconciliation. I welcome the fact that gender perspectives are now being incorporated into mandates and activities of all peacekeeping missions. The number of women in peace operations at all levels should increase. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the strengthening of the United Nations capacity in this field are vital.

The decision to cut poverty by half by 2015 is imperative, but we are not doing well enough. The pace at which the goal is being realized is far too slow. We now need new financial mechanisms and partnerships. In this spirit, we welcome the initiative presented a few days ago by the President of Brazil.

Official development assistance needs to treble. In Monterrey, the States members of the European Union agreed to increase official development assistance. Sweden is increasing its assistance to 0.86 per cent of its gross domestic product next year. Pledges must be followed by real cash money. We need to give the United Nations predictable, long-term financing. I entirely agree with what President Chirac said a few days ago: "Failing that, we will end up with a pick-and-choose United Nations". (*A/58/PV.7*)

The main responsibility for development is borne by every country itself in promoting democracy, good governance and respect of human rights. Official development assistance will always only be supplementary, as we all know. More important is the promotion of open and fair trade rules, the dismantling of tariffs and the reduction of subsidies. We expect the developed countries to show the way and to bring forward the Doha Development Agenda. Indeed, we must all see to it that the setback in the trade negotiations in Cancún is turned into a new start.

The Swedish Government presented a new bill in May this year on a coherent policy for global development. This is our way of translating the Millennium Declaration into national policy. We will put particular emphasis on the commitment to the eighth Millennium Development Goal, which is specifically about the obligations of the rich countries.

The consequences of climate change affect us all. The deterioration of the Kyoto Protocol must be halted.

We need a global system for migration that protects immigrant's rights and provides security for people who cross borders to study, research or work. Sweden and Switzerland support the Secretary-General in wishing to strengthen the role of migration on the United Nations agenda, including the establishment of a global commission on migration and development.

The General Assembly has rightly condemned the Israeli decision to deport President Arafat. Both parties must implement their obligations in accordance with the road map. We urge the Palestinian Authority to take action to cease the suicide bombings. Israel's extrajudicial killings are contradictory to international law and must be stopped immediately.

The international community must do its utmost to assist the parties in the peace process. The road map, as Jack Straw pointed out only a few minutes ago, should be implemented immediately with a view to the establishment of a peaceful and democratic Palestinian State in 2005. International monitors and observers should be sent to the area and Sweden is willing to take part in such a monitoring mechanism.

Sergio Vieira de Mello and many of his colleagues lost their lives in the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad about a month ago, a terrible loss for the international community. Sergio Vieira de Mello personified, better than most, the strength and commitment of the international community at its best.

The situation in Iraq remains volatile and dangerous. We are concerned about the security of the Iraqi people and of those who are in Iraq to ease their suffering. The bombing in Baghdad was aimed at the purposes that the United Nations stands for — to maintain international peace and security. It will not make us waiver. The United Nations will stay in Iraq. The international community needs the legitimacy of the United Nations as the only authority to be derived from in helping the Iraqi people recover self-government and rebuild their country. The handling of the conflict must remain an exception and not become a rule.

The future of the United Nations now lies in the hands of the Member States. If the United Nations fails, we all fail. In the statements most referred to so far in this year's debate, the media have competed in finding differences and disputes, but there is one thing that we all agree on. That is the belief in our United Nations. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has the world behind him.

*The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.*